

BRIARCLIFF QUARTERLY

MAKING OF AN EXPATRIATE BY SAMUEL PUTNAM
KENNETH PATCHEN AND CHAOS AS VISION BY T.
WEISS A DAY AT THE ZOO BY JAMES T. FARRELL
THREE POEMS BY W. S. GRAHAM WHAT THE DEAD
CAN TEACH BY JOHN GOULD FLETCHER LETTERS
FROM HOLLAND AND CANADA ANTHOLOGY BY
JEAN WAHL HENRI MICHAUX ALAIN BOSQUET
HOWARD MOSS JEAN CASSOU JULES SUPERVIEL-
LE ART BY CHAGALL AND VICTOR THALL RE-
VIEWS BY FREDERICK HOFFMAN AND
FRANK JONES OPEN LETTER TO
MACKENZIE KING

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The *Briarcliff Quarterly* is an international review devoted to the publication and interpretation of contemporary literary and cultural expression in the form of fiction, essays in criticism, poems, and book notices. In addition to printing the work of established authors and critics, the *Quarterly* particularly encourages new and previously unrecognized writers, especially from colleges both in America and abroad. From time to time developments in painting, sculpture, music, and the theatre are appraised. Art reproductions are a regular feature.

Published under the auspices of Briarcliff Junior College, the magazine forwards the educational objectives of the college by being a co-operative activity of teachers and students under the direction of *Norman Macleod* of the English Department. Through participation, members of the student staff learn methods of editorial assembly and critical selection of material, magazine make-up, proofreading, promotion and business operation.

Taking cognizance of the widespread sentiment for world cooperation in all spheres of human culture, and recognizing the need for a medium for expression for the one world community already existing—the international community of the arts—the *Briarcliff Quarterly* strives to reflect the creative spirit transcending national borders.

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BRIARCLIFF QUARTERLY

INTERNATIONAL LITERARY REVIEW

Number Ten

W. S. Graham

THREE POEMS

The Common and Private River

1

The birthright twins outrun
The million peopled mountain.
A chill walks through the bone.
The heart unmask the brain.
Two ways through warfare
And two ways through the flower.
The martyr strapped to fire.
The intellect strapped to ice.
My childhood in its house
In a prison of no choice
Spouts me a heart and head
From curious courts of the dead
And shouts me out my bread.
I'm poured from serpent fire
And from the cathedral ice
Into one gesture of ascension
Over a mother in stone
And an unknown illumination.

2

From two ways wakes this river over my brain
Seabent and burnt with phrases to a talking firth,
To a heaven's brandished boats weathering out war

That bubbles from my two sources into gospel,
The promised latitude loose as the worked-in-kelp
Gardens and miracle limits of the encompassed alphabets,
The proverb-raftered sky proving this seadome,
Floor laid of prayer bubbling bright up my tongue.
This river walks me by Christ's side in the garden
Of quickly a gesture of love in a holy metaphor
And a second housing me forever in His flower.
This Nile moves round its head more to my side
And side of the deep seadeaths and cradle deaths,
Deep fountainheads, the sheepblack passengers
Who, once my walking self, now keep their quarters.

This riverful make catch many a sea on a line
To jerk them, the flyfish prophets on paternosters
Over the breathside into the dolphin timbers
Casting the words, gilled angels fancyfined.
Ahead must lie the preaching rage and seastorms,
Public of faithful fathoms, the calipered vanities
Turning the sea to sermon, the heart to suburbs,
But shall at far last cast over all hilly seatops
The word of the ancient waters and wellbeginning
Two-sworded river wading the Eden Meadow.
I'm offered flowing but not set the strath
But through the twodyed clay the day breaks out
Dressed in my voyage and more than I have given
And sails me through my thousands drowned in the heart.
The brain's great bergs are drifting down to grief.

But shall at last sleet down on the Aesop cairns,
Nightmare of breath and running, the illumined word
On the violet peat of my eyes on the double ben.
Under the stoning weather safe as luck's house
The glenmen left in somewhere's longpast prison
Crowd in the roots handwriting me to the Atlantic
Famed in her Columbus foam and chapters of the drowned.
Death scales on the good and bad, bad of the quake
Of earth's breath brought to a thought in the mechanic hat,
Good of the children's hundred replies to the unending
Lies of the unencountered heart's ascending angers.
The promised estuary easy, and time's tongued myrtle
Above the buried meridian of the bog-riding year
Is over the outcast ores of the mining moment,
Is this bright river in environing helmets flowed.

Lying in Corn

Foughtover by word and word
This day between my heart and brain lies down
Locked into furious outcome of half my life.
This day dies down to tell so never better
Begun than quietly to lie still lowly bragging
Its birds across a common place that once
Told me all day my thousand caves of audience.
Golden to tell, the sky is up and soaring
Wearing my plundered years, my summed welfare
Taken to nothing but to lie down again in season
With greyhaired books and the forgiving grave.
And in the applauding corn this day dies down
To rest to suffer me half the country told
Into life by severe imagination, Silence alone
Answers clean out raiding my speaking fields.

Or there in front of God to lie down sweet
Where rocked back lost into my own closed care
The weeping word calls innocence into rest.

Night Now Ties on the Ferret's Bell

Nightfall kindles. Bright doorway bled on my shoulder
Strides round me with its lights rocked into skysigns
So crowded milky to streets with flying architectures
Over my small plodding below on the earthquaking boards.
And I'm passed always by my elbow journeymen and juries
Breathing the breath of fable on the historic stars
When all is said and down and ruin's will done.
Here under raging alphabets wheeling so brightly
Away into withering, I arrive and arrive at only
My own five helpless senses at heel and toe.
I set fanfare at the mythstarry doorway and set
Flower to my charts in the shade of some rare fire
That plotted me once awake. I strike, for the sake
Of beginning a cataract to light, the stars' dark wake
Walked over the sky's surprise and the generous skull.

Night falls already all over me signed to ascension.
Frost hoar and fire pillar into the whitehaired air
Kept bright and bearded with truth in a worded dustcloud
All round me rising in an orient's accomplished works
And rising right out over streetcries and zodiac cries.

The wind against branch against branch squeaks time away
To whisper no more happy nymphs or soldiers of elegy.
Stay still in some way not as the eye mapped out
But chased into fear by a beast bell bred in the fire
Of your own wilderness. I walk in the daniel house
Footprinting out the chain of a season of wandering
Between my inhabitants asleep in my darkneses.
My arms swing worlds away. My eyes' twin estuaries
Sail glowworms on my brain and earth my heart-cave.

Night fills the doorway. Sleep's children are fast away.
At dead of night the hero hunter's star-heel⁴
Over dewbreaking roads is cave-carved apprentice to history.
The meagre magnified to banners is withering away.
Day, in a first disguise of cockcrow and dogbarking,
Leans light against my shoulder and shakes the east
Out into shrines of rising on rumours of a bread
Baked into vision and broken to a courageous flesh.
The children are fast away. My footsteps are over.
The stitching root sews up the last grief broken
And meadows grow up from the marrow cold under picnics
Of happy astonishments of love and folk in grass.
Night falls away like words wished into innocence
And my head holds the astronomy-striking sun.
My eyes' twin children drown this page with light.

Samuel Putnam

BACKGROUND TO FLIGHT

The Making of an Expatriate

What is an expatriate? For most Americans, addicted to that rugged isolationism that flowered in the nineteenth century, to find a literary expression in such a work as *Innocents Abroad*, the word has always held a more or less unsavory connotation. So, America is not good enough for you, eh? The implication being that there must be something wrong with such an individual: he must be at best a weakling, if indeed he does not have some hidden vice or other shameful secret to conceal from his countrymen, which leads him to seek refuge

with immoral foreigners, the French for instance. Such an attitude, I recall, was widespread in my boyhood as Theodore Roosevelt from the White House thundered against "hyphenated Americans." It all went with the Big Stick, the "strenuous life," Teddy's toothsome "de-lighted" grin, his play-the-game-square-but-hit-the-line-hard philosophy, and the like; and if this was at the same time the era of the Platt Amendment and the marines in Nicaragua, the average citizen was not conscious of any contradiction. I recall how, when I used to long for a glimpse of the Old World, my parents would quote to me the railway advertising slogan: See America first. A lower plane of ideas, it may be, but it represented the thinking of the great American masses, especially those of the midwest and the far west. And this kind of thinking, if thinking it can be called, persists today and is carried over into politics.

No, in the last decades of the nineteenth and the early years of the present century they did not like cosmopolitans, and even the more cultivated were inclined to reprove or to lament a Henry James, whose indictment against America was that it had "no sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches . . . " Today, it is "internationalists" or the "international-minded" who come in for a sterner censure from isolationists in high places and the press that is their spokesman.

It was, perhaps, a James, a Whistler, a Sargent who first made America intellectually aware of expatriation as a literary-artistic phenomenon. Not that they are the first cases to be found or that the problem was not there long before their time; but American criticism in those days was a feeble thing, and the reading public was not concerned with the "ordeal" of a Henry James, a Henry Adams, a Mark Twain, an Emily Dickinson, or a William Dean Howells, the inner struggle that, from Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper to T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, and Ezra Pound, has been waged within the writer's creative mind, at odds with its environment or torn between allegiances.

That there has been such a struggle, no one can doubt who has made anything more than the most superficial study of American literature. "The first ambassador whom the new world of letters sent to the old" is the description of Washington Irving to be found in a nineteenth century manual for high school use. It is a fairly accurate one and unwittingly lays stress upon a significant point: the essentially colonial spirit that inspired our literary beginnings (read over once again those words of Henry James). Colonialism is the original root of cultural expatriation,

whether in North America, Spanish America, or Portuguese-speaking Brazil. Irving, our first important writer following the achievement of nationhood, was a little too much the ambassador, a little too aware of his role and position, and uncertain, moreover, as to where his ultimate loyalties as a man of letters lay. The dichotomy shows in his work; but whether he is writing of the Alhambra or the Catskills, he remains the disciple of the eighteenth century Addison and Steele, British in inspiration and careful always of the proprieties of his prose.

The American theme in itself does not assure an undivided spirit or an undivided art. Who could be more American in subject-matter than Cooper; yet as a novelist what does he owe to Sir Walter Scott and other European models? The truth of the matter is that, thoroughly American as he may seem to us, the author of the *Leatherstocking Tales* passed through a very real crisis upon his return from his Continental travels, as may be seen in *The Monikins* and *Home As Found*.

Similarly, in the case of other American writers of the first half and middle of the last century, if one looks closely enough one will find in almost all of them the signs of this conflict, if only in the form of an intense reaction against the Old World and its culture. Speaking out of Transcendentalism for an America and a class that were attaining an ever increasing degree of creature-comfort, a Ralph Waldo Emerson might breakfast on New England pie and sit down to pen an essay on Self-Reliance; yet the shadow of that other, transatlantic world was with him just as surely as it was with the creator of *Huckleberry Finn*. There is, of course, Thoreau. He would seem to have been the least aware of it, unless it was the Quaker-abolitionist Whittier or that traveled linguist, Longfellow, whose themes are so often European, but who is so untouched by this as by the other deeper complexities of life. What of Melville, whose continent is neither Europe nor America but a metaphysical one, but whose prose is that of his Puritan forebears, the prose of the seventeenth century and the King James Version? Obviously, one could not say that the writer who gave us *The Marble Faun*, the "American Hamlet" as he has been called, was unscathed by the dilemma; nor could it be said of Lowell—not Lowell of the *Bigelow Papers*, not Lowell the abolitionist, but the author of the Birmingham Address of later years. And Walt Whitman, poet of American democracy: what of him? The very ecstasy and anguish, bordering on the dithyrambic, of his revolt, his quest for the new and utterly American word, should give us the answer.

Expatriation does not of necessity imply taking boat for foreign shores. There were those who, unlike an Irving or a James, could not afford it, or who for one reason or another preferred to remain here. One can be an expatriate without leaving his native soil. What of those

stay-at-home fugitives, Emily Dickinson and Sarah Orne Jewett? The latter found haven in a spinster's New England, the former in the solitude of her study and her woman's heart; yet both were fleeing the same increasingly urban and industrial, the same "ugly" civilization that Henry James disliked so heartily and that led Howells and Adams first to investigate and then to forswear Karl Marx and socialism.

One could go on— The important thing is to recognize that the problem is not a new one, that it is basically a cultural problem that has been with us from the start. It is significant that the problem of expatriation should first have been brought vividly to the consciousness of Americans in the 1880's and the 1890's; for this was the era when, following the second Grant administration and the rise of the Tweed Ring in New York City, under Rutherford B. Hayes and his successors, American monopoly capitalism and with it American imperialism were being born. Professors of economics have a word for it. They will tell us that what was taking place was the combination of banking and industrial capital to form finance capital: the rise of Wall Street in other words. And Wall Street— Listen to Lafcadio Hearn:

Fancy a good romance about Wall Street, so written that the public could understand it! There is of course a tremendous romance there; but only a financier could really know machinery, and his knowledge is technical. But what can the mere *littérateur* do, walled up in a world of mathematical mystery?

The New York scene impressed Hearn as "frightful, nightmarish, devilish," and led him to exclaim: "Civilization is a hideous thing. Blessed is savagery!" The Gauguin motive; but Hearn had tried the primitive life and had given it up. Even his beloved Japan was fast becoming industrialized. "Civilization is a fraud." But there was no escape.

Hearn the exotic; that pose-striking "unwashed savage," Ambrose Bierce; the aristocracy-worshiping Henry James; a Back Bay Henry Adams, loathing "this banker's world," this "banker's Olympus," and turning from Marx toward the Catholic Church; a Whistler painting Thames nocturnes and jesting too facilely with an Oscar Wilde; a Sarah Orne Jewett in Deephaven; an Emily Dickinson and her agonized choice; a William Dean Howells flirting with socialism; a Mark Twain, writing *Life on the Mississippi* to pay his debts and hating Teddy Roosevelt and the Big Stick, yet guffawing like any vulgar Cook's tourist in the art galleries of Europe—what were all these if not the victims of a split and tortured personality that is with us to this day as we listen to the diatribes of an Ezra Pound directed against the "commercial" American publisher and a public that cannot or will not appreciate the beauties and the rhythms of old Provence?

The plaint is a familiar one. It will be found in Henry James, with

whom Pound has so many affinities, and in others of his generation, the so-called Gilded Age. It was not that the public did not care for "culture"; it did. It craved culture, but a culture of its own defining. It looked up to men of letters, as such, with almost superstitious awe, as beings apart; but it became annoyed and did not buy nor read books that it could not understand, novels that probed the complexities of the life of the mind and the delicate nuances of daily living, or poetry that did not resemble the *Idyls of the King*. It was, indeed, fresh ground that Stephen Crane was breaking with his slum girl, *Maggie*; but *Maggie* was at least comprehensible where *What Maisie Knew* or *The Golden Bowl* was not. And so it was to be a few decades later. The public taste by that time might have broadened sufficiently on the side of content to be able to accept, and even make a best-seller of, a *Main Street* or a *Babbitt*; but on the side of form, technique, it was not up to a Joyce, a Stein, a Pound, or an Eliot. These, above all Joyce, were the great incomprehensibles, fit subject for the newspaper columnist's jibe, and their "incomprehensibility" became an offense. This only increased the near-fanatic devotion of their followers, who now turned upon the Sinclair Lewises and their kind. Tempers were growing short. On the one hand, the expatriate or cosmopolitan was no longer merely an object of condescension when not of pity on the part of Americans at large; he was on the way to becoming an enemy; and on the other hand, the intellectual who had fled these shores was to begin to look upon himself as an "exile"—it was Pound who, in the 1920's, first gave currency to the term by employing it as the title of a small and very exclusive little magazine, edited from Rapallo, Italy, and published (through my intermediation, as it happened) in South Wabash Avenue, Chicago.

One thing to be noted in connection with the earlier generation of "exiles" is the fact that practically all of them came from the substantial middle class; they had a financial rating or could lay hands on sufficient funds to enable them to live abroad. Henry James' grandfather, like Irving's father, let us not forget, had made a fortune in business; Stein and Pound, who were to follow shortly, were in reality *rentiers*, and the same to a degree may be said of Eliot. In other words, it was business, however ugly, that made possible their escape from the civilization it created. It was not until after World War I that the falling franc and third class tourist cabin brought to Paris' Left Bank a new type of American, one who, as a rule had a good deal less money than his predecessors in flight, and often little or none at all. This was to lead to a different kind of expatriate scene, with the genuine artist and writer hardly distinguishable on the café terrace from the cut-rate tourist and the first-cabin slummers out to take it all in. It was to result, likewise, in the creation of a species of aristocracy among the "exiles," based

not alone upon talent but upon the length of time one had been away from America, as well.

It is not surprising if exiles are unhappy; one expects them to be; and these American fugitives have been no exception. Even though he found there a court and aristocracy, castles, manors, thatched cots, ivied ruins, and all the rest, Henry James was not happy in England, in London; nor was he any happier in Paris, where he found the men of his craft too self-centered, lacking in graciousness—they were not “*accueillants*.” The truth is that the author who began but never finished *The Ivory Tower* was haunted always by the ghost of an all too corporeal America. And Pound was to be forever moving on, from London to Paris to Rapallo. This trait is another that was to show in the fevered generation of the twenties.

But still they came. It was the Mauve Decade that witnessed the first migration in any numbers, when painters, writers, architects, musicians began sailing for Europe, some to tarry amid the Mimis and the ateliers of Montparnasse, while others went on to Rome, Milan, Naples. Stifled by the stockyards atmosphere of Chicago, Henry Blake Fuller, who was to become one of America's finest and most neglected prose writers, embarked for Italy, traversed the peninsula in a phaeton, and wrote *The Chevalier of Pensieri Vani*. He was to return to Chicago shortly and continue his exile there, for many long years; for those of us who knew him, knew that it *was* an exile, only alleviated by what James has called “the pale little art of fiction.” In the opening years of the present century, Gertrude Stein, having completed her studies at Johns Hopkins and at Harvard, went to join her brother, Leo, in France. Having rambled through Spain, Italy, and Provence, Pound settled in London, about 1907. Eliot's expatriation was a more gradual affair, from the time he began his studies in philosophy and French literature at the Sorbonne, in 1910, to 1927, when he became a British subject and, as he would add, a monarchist and an Anglo-Catholic; but it really may be dated from the eve of the First World War and *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

The war of 1914-1918 had a profound effect upon American intellectuals, an effect which was first visible among those that stayed at home, and which took the form of an intense questioning of values and an impassioned search for native roots. This reaction was given literary expression by the group surrounding the *Seven Arts* magazine, including such writers as Sherwood Anderson, Conrad Aiken, Waldo Frank, Van Wyck Brooks, Louis Untermeyer, Alfred Kreymborg, and others, with Randolph Silliman Bourne emerging as the dominant figure, one whose full stature is only today becoming apparent, a quarter of a century after his premature death. Bourne's paper on “The War and the Intellectuals,”

published in the *Seven Arts* for July, 1917, has been described by his biographer, Louis Filler, as "the only analysis of that important subject written in America." No mere pacifist, though the pacifists might claim or use him, Bourne was opposed to the mentality that made possible America's entry into the conflict. There were times when he felt that he was living "at the end of an intellectual era."

The *Seven Arts*, like the socialistic *Liberator*, was soon silenced, suppressed by the censor, and the group about it was dispersed; but before this happened it had left its mark upon an era, even though it is chiefly remembered now by the literary historian and by the few who were associated with it or close to its influence. Had the impulse it launched been continued instead of being throttled by the war—the impulse toward a discovery of deep-lying roots and the building of a new and higher type of Americanism—there might have been a different story to tell.

Meanwhile, out of the blood and mire of the trenches and the experiences of a military prison, two American writers, John Dos Passos and E. E. Cummings, were to give us our first and finest war novels, in *Three Soldiers* and *The Enormous Room*. This was the answer to Alan Seeger and his famous "rendezvous." Every schoolma'am and school child had memorized that heroic bit of verse; it was part of the drive for American intervention in the war, in support of the mentality that Randolph Bourne had condemned. Cummings and Dos Passos showed us what the true character of the rendezvous was, the one from the hell of No Man's Land, the other from his prison barracks, where he had been confined for insubordination, his chief offense being that he had written a letter to Emma Goldman. With the exception of Barbusse's *Under Fire*, theirs are the first and last novels of World War I that are worth bothering about until some ten years later, when Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero* appear, with benefit of perspective. Other Americans were silent so far as any significant productions are concerned. It was a flare in the dark, like that represented in England by the poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, something of whose disillusionment was to be recaptured in the 1930's by Auden, Spender, Lewis, and their associates. In France, England, and America, writers were soon to turn from the war itself to the world that the war had left behind it; like the French Dadaists, they were to begin challenging the basic wisdom of their elders who were responsible for it all.

Most of the Americans came back, many of them—Cowley, Josephson, Cummings, and others—to return to France a short while later as civilians and "exiles"; but a few stayed on and went native by marrying French girls, rearing French-speaking families, and, often, all but losing

the use of their mother-tongue. An instance of this was George Rheims, whose novel, *An Elegant Peccadillo*, I translated for a New York publisher. During the war Rheims had been an artillery liaison officer with the French command. He had come to know the French and to love them and had decided to settle there. When I met him, he could still speak English, though not as fluently as his adopted language but writing it was out of the question; hence his need of the services of a translator. (One New York reviewer found it hard to believe and thought the book a hoax on my part.) Rheims had made his place in French life, had a beautiful family and middle-class home, and appeared to be quite happy. There was also William Aspenwall Bradley, who, taking a French wife, proceeded to build up a lucrative business as a literary agent (he had begun as a writer). Bradley like Rheims was to a large extent Gallicized, and Madame Bradley's salon on the aristocratic Ile-Saint-Louis was frequented by France's leading men of letters.

Not all were so fortunate as this, however. There were some who, unable to bring themselves to return to the States and without the means of a decent livelihood, became drifters, floating from one job to another where a knowledge of English might be in demand—provided they were able to procure the always difficult *carte de travail*, or labor-permit for foreigners. Not a few became bartenders and even race track and prize fight hangers-on, and the like. Their meeting-place, when they were in funds, was Harry's Bar, near the place de l'Opéra, where they would encounter and mingle with the tourists from home. They seldom came to the Left Bank—indeed, they seemed rather to shun the company of American writers and artists—but formed a motley colony of their own, along with the touts, pugs, bartenders, tourist guides, gamblers, confidence men, etc., who had swarmed over to France during the years immediately following the war. They all constituted a demi-monde that was half French, half American, a sort of weird amalgam of Brooklyn and Montmartre.

One thing they did have, or had acquired, was a feeling for the subtleties of French psychology and a command of the rich juicy idiom of the Parisian populace, the kind that you hear spoken by chauffeurs over their onion soup at Les Halles, around five o'clock in the morning. In this respect, the literati of the Left Bank, whose French was for the most part execrable, could not compare with them. I have known high school "teachers" of French who, upon leaving the boat train at the gare Saint-Lazare, were unable to tell the taxi-driver where to take them. It was a standing jest among us that the best French spoken by an American in Paris was to be heard from the Negro bootblack (point of origin Harlem) in the basement of the American Express Company's building in the rue Scribe. All of which did not make life any the easier

for these uprooted ones; for instinctively they realized that they were lost men, men without a country.

The type of expatriate that I have been describing was, of course, the exception, although there were more of these than one might think. The vast majority sailed back past the Statue of Liberty, to be feted one day and forgotten the next, their old jobs gone in many cases and new ones scarce, and with no provision for their welfare and for the period of readaptation to civilian life. They were heroes, was not that enough? It is a story that is being repeated after World War II; but now there is at least some provision for veterans, some pretense of governmental concern. The discontent of the ex-soldiers was accordingly to swell and grow for a decade, and was to culminate in the historic and tragic bonus march of the Hoover administration. Among the veterans were many writers, artists, and intellectuals who, while finding other, subtler and deeper sources of unhappiness in the American post-war scene, could not but share the resentment of the fighting men at a condition which was part of a larger picture of inflation, false prosperity, unemployment, and capital and labor strife.

The great steel strike of 1919, led by William Z. Foster, set many intellectuals looking toward the Left, a trend that was given impetus by the Russian Revolution, which for a number of years had a considerable effect, but one that is not to be unduly stressed, on the thinking of American liberals. This was due in good part to the vibrant, dramatic figure John Reed. On the whole, the liberals were inclined to fear what Herbert Croly, writing in the *New Republic* at the time of the Kerensky revolution, called "the Jacobinism of war"; they feared that revolution was inevitable and could only hope that when it came it might be "tempered by law and healing in its effect." In the past they had endeavored to draw near the labor movement, had participated in strikes and the struggle for civil liberties, had attended soap-box meetings in Washington Square, and had listened to the teachings of Emma Goldman; but their faith was about gone, their pessimism profound. John Reed himself, even as he sailed for Russia to witness the revolution, had about given up hope, as is clearly revealed in his little known paper, "Almost Thirty."

Reed was one of the world's great reporters, and in Russia his faith was galvanized into new life by the sheer drama of events; his *Ten Days That Shook the World* was the result and for a brief moment stirred the imagination of intellectuals back home. How fleeting was that moment is perhaps indicated by the fact that when, upon his return to America, he stepped into his old familiar haunts in Greenwich Village, he found that they had not even missed him, much less read his articles, and when told that he had been in Russia covering a revolution, could only inquire languidly over the teacups: "Was it interesting, Jack?"

Such was the social-political climate that the soon-to-be exiles found upon their return from the war.

Revolution was assuredly not the answer for these young middle-class intellectuals of the 1920's, any more than it was for those sons of the bourgeoisie, the French Dadaists. Like the latter, or for that matter, like the mid-century romantics in France, they had in reality no desire for any fundamental economic, social, or political change. They were deeply, painfully dissatisfied with the America that they saw about them but would have liked to alter effects without probing too deeply into causes. Politically, things were going from bad to worse: Harding and the Ohio Gang; the carryings-on in the White House; Teapot Dome—Economically: inflation and a post-war boom followed by deflation and panic. If not revolution, what?

Culturally, were the prospects any more encouraging? Greenwich Village was no longer the "Bohemian" refuge it once had been; those who formerly had lived there saw it with different eyes upon their return from the battlefields of Europe. The bourgeois-escapist character it had always had was now visible and becoming all the time more accentuated. Commercial tearooms and similar enterprises were flourishing, rents were mounting, and the bond salesman and the advertising man were moving in. The dignified and substantial atmosphere of the old Washington Square days was gone forever. While a number of real artists resided there still, their number was diminishing, and there was a growing tawdriness and falsity to the place. In any event, the gospel according to Maxwell Bodenheim seemed scarcely satisfying to those who had stood at Armageddon and battled for Wall Street's millions. In the meantime, miniature, imitation "villages" were springing up all over the country, in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Minneapolis, Cleveland, and elsewhere, and Freud and the *Interpretation of Dreams*, a recent discovery, were being widely utilized to explain and justify the throwing off of "bourgeois" inhibitions.

In the field of literature there were hopeful signs; and now that the *Seven Arts* was gone, Chicago appeared to be the center of activity. The famed "Chicago Renaissance," which had begun in 1912 when the British Imagists descended upon Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* magazine, was well under way by 1917; Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* and Sandburg's epoch-marking *Chicago Poems* had been published; Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and Windy McPherson's *Son* were being read and discussed; and from Springfield, Illinois, Vachel Lindsay was sounding his loud bassoon. Margaret Anderson and the *Little Review* and Maurice Evans and the Little Theater—note the recurrence of the adjective "little"—were catering to that portion of the intelligentsia that believed in making "no compromise with the public taste." In the

east, popular attention was centered on Mencken and Nathan in the *Smart Set*, and Mencken a few years later was to go on and found the *American Mercury*, guffawing all the while at the "booboisie" and developing his nihilistic philosophy.

All these were signs that indicated a deepening discontent with American cultural and spiritual values. The revolt was of a mixed character, being marked on the one hand by a popular-democratic trend as in Anderson, Sandburg, and Lindsay, and on the other hand, by a certain tendency to esotericism and a contempt for the art of the people that with Mencken and his followers became a contempt for the people themselves.

It was in the form of the novel, on the threshold of the 1920's, that the graver preoccupations and changing attitudes of thinking Americans began to be reflected most clearly; and it was out of the midwest that the impulse came, with such works as *Windy McPherson's Son* and *Winesburg, Ohio* representing what Carl Van Doren has described as the "revolt from the village." It was, however, with Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* that this phase of the rebellion was crystallized for the large body of American readers. The best-selling success of *Main Street* probably astonished no one more than the author. A number of reasons have been advanced for its popularity, one that seems as logical as any other being that it voiced the disillusionment that many a doughboy felt when he saw his home town again. In any case, there can be no doubt that there existed a widespread dissatisfaction with the provincialism of American life as small town morals and mores extended their influence to the cities in the form of Mr. Mencken's "Comstockery" and similar manifestations. Are not the Spoon River epitaphs a reflection of this? And is it strange, then, if those intellectuals living or congregating on Manhattan Island—which Mencken once suggested should declare its independence of the United States—were inclined to view the entire scene, including the rising school of "debunkers," as hopelessly provincial?

Coming more and more under the influence of Mencken and the Menckenites, Lewis was to write his *Babbitt*—Babbitt looking at Babbitt, as many saw it; but as those who found fault with the author might have perceived, that in itself was something; it was a great deal; it was something that could not have happened in an earlier period: the reading public was no longer afraid of seeing itself in a mirror.

The mirror was being held up now by a number of young writers—"young romantics," as Henry Seidel Canby dubbed them—with a far greater sensitivity than Lewis and with a gift for poetic expression in the novel. Indeed, it seemed as if "all the sad young men" had all at once sat down to put their sadness into creative prose. The year 1921 saw a memorable harvest of such works in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side*

of *Paradise*, Ben Hecht's *Eric Dorn*, Stephen Vincent Benet's *The Beginning of Wisdom*, and Floyd Dell's *Moon Calf*, to mention the outstanding ones. The "flaming youth" generation, the sorrows of the undergraduate, love in Greenwich Village or in Chicago—were these writers romantics, or were they simply treating poetically an unpoetic reality? It is significant that none of them became "exiles" but stayed with America for good or ill, whatever the effect upon their lives and their art. Some, like Hecht and Fitzgerald, were to succumb to the lure of Hollywood. Others, like Dell, were gradually to lapse into silence. Only a few, a very few, like the author of *John Brown's Body* and *Western Star*, stubbornly continued their efforts to hew out a meaning for this America of theirs. (It is worth noting that *John Brown's Body* was published in 1928, at the height of the Harding-Coolidge "prosperity era.") It was an uphill pull, calling for courage, vision, faith, and these qualities the spokesmen for disillusioned youth on the whole did not possess. They may not have chosen exile—but was Hollywood to be preferred?

Benet was not the only one who found and kept the faith, a faith in the human and esthetic potentialities of America in spite of all its faults and sins and its weaknesses parading often as its strength; Sandburg, William Carlos Williams, Kreymborg, and one or two others carried on, their voices all but lost in the din that came from the chorus of debunkers as, with the approach of the 1928-1929 "prosperity" peak, American life and American literature grew seemingly all the while more false, unreal.

It was a speakeasy generation, this one. As one of the best young poets of the time, Norman Macleod, was to put it retrospectively, in a volume which he at first significantly entitled *Exile Without Return* (later published as *Thanksgiving Before November*):

The philosophy of our time was written by bootleggers
And we went to the speakeasies for knowledge and hope
And the taste was bitter in our mouths. . . .

We were a wassail of sorrow. . . .
A speakeasy world this is and we
Are punchdrunk with weariness.

Prohibition, the speakeasy, Al Capone, the "flapper," bobbed hair, "flaming youth": these were the topics of the day. I recall how, as a reporter in Chicago, I had to do an elaborate series in defense of the flapper; and when a visitor came to town, we of the press had four stock queries in order of importance (we used to laugh about it):

- 1) What do you think of Chicago?
- 2) What do you think of prohibition?

3) What do you think of bobbed hair?

4) What do you think of the American flapper?

Is it any wonder if "we went to the speakeasies for knowledge and hope," or if "the taste was bitter in our mouths"?

If there was any escape to be found, it would seem that it could only have been such a one as that which Alfred Kreymborg discovered, or invented; for it was about this time that he began wandering up and down the land, strumming his "mandolute" and drinking in the life of his fellow Americans. I remember hearing and seeing him in Chicago, at the old Dill Pickle Club. Leisurely, dreamy, gentle, lovable, he was pretty much of an anomaly in those Harding days. A cultivated vagabond in an era when the picturesque nineteenth-century tramp, who was very much an anarchist and an individualist, had given way to the permanent unemployed on the park bench; a neo-Whitmanic loafer and soul-inviter in an age when other men were looking to Wall Street or the "curb" for get-rich-quick fortunes, he stood out against the blare and glare of this brassy epoch like some wandering Minnesinger of old, dedicated to the high cause of poetry and romance. He seemed a little odd to most people; but was he not, perhaps, wiser after all than the stock-market grubbers and those who were careful to keep up the payments on their life-insurance? Granting that he was, we could not all follow his example; we did not all have a mandolute, and we could not all turn vagabonds. He, no more than Maxwell Bodenheim, who constantly commuted between Greenwich Village and the Dill Pickle to read his early poems, appeared to have the solution so far as we were concerned.

Meanwhile, the change that was gradually coming over the most significant sector of American intellectual life, as well as the conditions under which the intellectual had to labor, was being vividly illustrated by the history of one publication, the *Dial*. Founded in Chicago by Francis F. Browne, it had functioned as a dull and dignified fortnightly of the old school for forty years, when, in 1919, it was transferred to New York to become for a brief period an organ of militant reform, with Robert Morss Lovett as editor and with Harold Stearns, George Donlin, and Clarence Britten as his assistants, while John Dewey, Thorstein Veblen, and others served as advisers. These advisers drew up what they called a "reconstruction program," a program which involved fighting for free speech, the right of assembly, the release of political prisoners and conscientious objectors, etc. But the editors speedily discovered that, even with the noblest of aims, they could not go on publishing a magazine that was not popular and commercial in character without a "pork-barrel," or, as Broadway would say, an "angel." In other words, it had to be underwritten; and by the end of November, 1919, an underwriter had been found in the person of the wealthy Scofield Thayer.





EAST END LONDON

Byron Thomas

With the advent of Thayer, the *Dial's* radical period came to an abrupt end and the young liberals who had been connected with it passed over to the *Freeman*, which itself, under Albert J. Nock's editorship, was to take on more and more of a literary and less and less of a socio-political tinge. From then on until its scarcely noted demise some ten years later, the magazine was to be enveloped in an "atmosphere of cloistered gloom," as Harry Hansen put it, making its monthly appearance in "a garb so colorless that if you put it on a library table, it would immediately disappear." It actually seemed to strive for a dull and highbrow aspect, and under the editorship first of Stewart Mitchell, then of Gilbert Seldes, and finally of Marianne Moore, it promptly became the organ of the advanced intelligentsia, with decided European leanings.

Among the Continental writers whom the *Dial* published were Anatole France, Oswald Spengler, Paul Valéry, Benedetto Croce, Ford Madox Hueffer (soon to be Ford Madox Ford), William Butler Yeats, Arthur Symons, and George Moore, with Thomas Mann, Maxim Gorky, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, George Saintsbury, and others contributing correspondence. Anatole France's last words, the opening pages of *The Decline of the West*, and George Moore's *Imaginary Conversations* all appeared in these pages. The editors did not neglect American writers, and the magazine's annual \$2,000 prize went in turn to Sherwood Anderson, T. S. Eliot, Van Wyck Brooks (for his study of Mark Twain), Marianne Moore, E. E. Cummings, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and Kenneth Burke. Carl Sandburg, Amy Lowell, Hart Crane, Conrad Aiken, John Dos Passos, Edmund Wilson, Evelyn Scott, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld, and George Santayana were among the other contributors. But its stress in literature as in plastic art—it reproduced the work of Picasso, Derain, Matisse, and other European modernists along with that of a few Americans—was palpably on the European product. And the *Dial*, it is to be remembered, was the most influential organ of the day among intellectuals.

In 1922, it printed Eliot's prize poem, *The Waste Land*, a poem which seemed to sum up all the ugliness of that world left by the war. Its effect upon thoughtful young Americans was instantaneous and profound, especially after it was published in book form the following year; and the typist returning to her furnished room at tea time and Mrs. Porter washing her feet in soda water became symbols that, whether Eliot and his admirers realized it or not, meant far more than the recondite myth behind the work and all the scholarly exegesis that the author might see fit to give us. For Mrs. Porter and the typist symbolized a desert that all could behold about them, while the poet's brilliant technical gifts elevated this hymn of death—of little daily deaths-in-life—into a masterpiece which was to influence and dominate a generation to come.

It is true that, as Malcolm Cowley points out in his *Exile's Return*, not all of those who admired *The Waste Land* most intensely for its form were prepared to accept its socially reactionary implications. "Here," says Cowley, "was a poem that agreed with all our recipes and prescriptions of what a great modern poem should be. . . . We were prepared to defend it against the attacks of the people who didn't understand what Eliot was trying to do—but we made private reservations. The poem had forced us into a false position, had brought our consciously adopted principles into conflict with our instincts. At heart—not intellectually, but in a purely emotional fashion—we didn't like it. We didn't agree with the idea that the poem set forth."

That idea in essence was: a condemnation of the unesthetic present, an implied glorification of the beauties of the past; and the general direction, as soon became apparent, was toward the bosom of the Church. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Eliot and *The Waste Land* had their effect, and a pronounced one, upon the expatriate movement, which had by this time set in; it was from their café chairs in Montparnasse or from some other nook in France that Cowley and his compatriots, the other émigrés of 1921, formulated their judgments on the poem. One wonders: if the migration had been deferred a year or two or if the poem had appeared a little earlier and they had analyzed it in a New York apartment or a Village tearoom, would the result have been any different? Probably not. As it was, *The Waste Land* if anything likely served to swell the ranks of the exiles; for were not they too, in reality, going back to the past?

The hegira had begun dramatically enough, not to say theatrically; but this should not lead us to overlook the very real anguish and the challenge that lay behind it. It had started with a symposium on *Civilization in the United States* by thirty intellectuals, with Harold Stearns as editor. At last, they were getting down to bedrock, and what they found was not pay-dirt. No sooner had he written his preface and delivered the manuscript to the publisher than Stearns caught a boat for France. This was the signal. More and more followed him in "a great migration eastward into new prairies of the mind" (Cowley).

What were the faults that these writers had to find with their country, as revealed in their symposium? Many and varied ones; but the sum of the indictment appeared to be the overwhelming material values enforced by a standardized and machine-made civilization, the lack of any spiritual depth, the falsity, the sentimentality, the hypocrisy, the repressions that go with such a civilization. There were numerous minor criticisms, but they all came back to this. The conclusion was that life must somehow be spiritualized—again no thought of altering the material base—and it seemed that this could only be done in Europe. Such was the view expressed by Stearns in the last article that he wrote before sailing, an article that was published in the *Freeman*.

As I write these lines, I think of Stearns as I knew him in Paris, wandering at night from bar to bar. He usually came in late, after he had written his "Peter Pickum" column on the Longchamps races. Most often, he would stand at the bar alone and drink, quiet, affable, not seeking company yet not "up-stage"; shunning as a rule the haunts of the Montparnasse crowd, but seemingly unable to stay away entirely; he was seldom seen in the Dôme and only occasionally at the Select. It was always hard for me to make out whether he liked the company of writers or not; certainly he never sought them out; on the other hand, he never went out of his way to avoid them, was never rude. He did not even avoid the subject of literature. You felt, however, that his heart was not in it, unless it was the literature of the past.

I remember one evening when he did talk, and brilliantly, of the subject in which I was interested: Rabelais. That, as it happened, was on a night when the two of us were alone in a little out of the way *bistro*, and when we had before us, in place of our accustomed *fin*es or eight-franc Scotch, a bottle of really good Burgundy. Again, I have seen him at a café table, as the conversation showed signs of coming close to home—it might be some college youth of the late twenties or the early thirties who had just come over and who, familiar with the Harold Stearns legend, was working up to the point where (so he fancied) he would be able to draw the Great Exile out of his shell—I have seen him on such an occasion turn to a French girl and devote his attention exclusively to her; yet in this as in everything that he did there was no stress, no pointedness, no gesture designed to offend, although as I knew he could be caustic enough when he wished to be.

It was when the subject of horses came up that Stearns was unaffectedly interested, animated one might say. Horses and women, American women in particular. Perhaps it was his Kentucky background. Not that he was ever, to my knowledge, anything approaching a "ladies' man"; but in Jimmy's or the Dingo I used to like to watch him as, over his solitary drink, he studied the behavior of some girl or matron from the States engaged in losing her repressions. At such times a look of amazement would come over his face, the rather sad smile that he commonly wore would give way to an expression of amusement, and he would actually seem happy for a moment.

There was one time when I was showing the Left Bank at night to a young woman from New York and Hollywood whose profession was that of literary and motion picture agent. She had come to Paris on business matters, and on this her last night before catching the early morning boat train at the Saint-Lazare Station, she wanted to see all that there was to be seen. My wife and I having known her in New York, she had asked us to be her guides. As I had put her in touch with an author whom she considered to be a lucrative prospect and in addition

had introduced her to Luigi Pirandello, Jean Cocteau, and a few other celebrities that afternoon, she was not only feeling elated commercially but was in a mood for lion hunting.

We were sitting in the comparatively quiet *câfé Flore* when Stearns wandered in. Never too careful about his appearance, he was looking his seediest that evening, and I am sure that to Florence (as we shall call her) he must have seemed the next thing to a tramp. I called him over, presented him to our guest, and he sat down with us. Florence, I could tell, was puzzled. She doubtless took him for a "character," a Maxwell Bodenheim of Montparnasse. It was not until Harold excused himself for a moment that she had a chance to ask us who—and what—he was. In as few words as possible I sketched in his history.

"Harold Stearns! Oh, yes, I've heard of him. I've read about him." (This I doubted.) "But what does he *do*?"

"He covers the races for the *Chicago Tribune*."

"Bu-u-t—I thought you said he was an intellectual, a great intellectual. What—" At that moment Harold came back.

From then on, Florence proceeded to "get high." She is the sort of person who can only be described as bouncing, for bounce she does in all literalness. I have seldom known anyone with more excess vitality. In New York or Hollywood this vitality is drained off into business channels, where it seems to pay remarkably satisfying dividends, and in office hours she is shrewd, hard-headed, driving though a good fellow underneath; but when she plays—we had a chance to see that night. She insisted upon ordering champagne, but we would not let her. Instead, Harold must initiate her into the milky-green mysteries of a *pernod*. A *pernod*, to tell the truth, was about the only thing capable of coping with Florence, and Stearns appeared to take a delight in seeing what would happen; for once he was enjoying himself.

Well, the *pernods* worked, and within a short while Florence had made a best-seller out of Harold Stearns.

"You think I can't do it? You just leave it to little Florence. You write that book for me, that's all—"

I was watching Stearns. I had never seen him so relaxed, so amused; but beneath his amusement was an unconcealed wonderment.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he said in an aside; "I didn't know they made them like that in America."

This remark led me in turn to wonder: had he ever really seen his America before renouncing it? Had he seen the people in it? Was he beginning to feel something of this at times? One thing I know is: he was not a happy man; but his unhappiness, his loneliness, was something that he chose to guard against all intruders. To me, it was all the deeper and more real for that.

In 1933, not long before I returned to America, Stearns finally

agreed to write an article for my magazine, the *New Review*. I felt that this was a triumph on my part. But the depression was on by then and the magazine, as little magazines have a way of doing, passed out of existence. I wish that it could have survived one more number, if only to have published him. At any rate, I now had the feeling for the first time that Stearns *would* go back to America. I never saw him after he came back, but I read his nostalgia-laden book and it seemed to me that once again he had exiled himself, this time from an exile that had become his *patria*.

This, remember, was the intellectual who led the great migration of 1921. I do not believe that his case is as atypical as it may seem. It has its theatric aspects, but these were not intended by him. They were due to his determination to go all the way, and to his innate and excessive modesty. Nevertheless, the question is still left unanswered: why did Harold Stearns, who fled America to find a more spiritual existence and a nobler culture, become a Peter Pickum? Why were there so many Peter Pickums among the expatriates? Was Stein right about the Lost Generation? Why lost, in what manner and how far lost? It was perhaps the first and only time in history that very nearly the worthwhile whole of a young generation had deliberately, of its own free choice, gone into exile. Exiled by whom? By what?

It is, I find, still hard for those who stayed at home to understand. To such, one can only quote these magnificent verses of Guillaume Apollinaire:

Be forbearing when you compare us
With those who were the perfection of order.
We who everywhere seek adventure,
We are not your enemies.
We would give you vast and strange domains
Where flowering mystery waits for him would pluck it.
There are new flames and colors never glimpsed
A myriad bodiless phantoms
On which we must confer reality.
We would explore beauty, enormous, silent land.
There is a season for the hunt and for the huntsman's
return.
Have compassion for us who are always fighting on the
frontiers
Of the boundless future,
Compassion for our errors, compassion for our sins.

Soyez indulgents . . . pitié pour nous. . .

Howard Moss

CLICHES FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

1.

That accidental morning
No garden could deny
Pleasure its misuses;
Cicadas cried bitterly
The language of their briefness.
Then, in the wet eye
A hopeful desert shook
Its windward, dear oasis,
But I, with a backward look,
Ran from the dread seducers.

2.

If I had come to kiss
Cinderella on the bank,
I would know more of this.
I hovered on the brink
Twirling parent images;
Then as my heart sank,
The sun sank in the rushes.
I played my water wrist
As a fisherman a line,
But it fell, it fell, all the way down.

3.

Plants cannot travel,
Water cannot speak;
The green leaf is rooted,
The blue lake is mute.
(O dark in the dark.)
But if love is a miracle
And I may marvel,
Last night when I woke,
Plants knew distance
And the water spoke.

4.

By the shore-line talk
Of the sweet water lake,
And the rubbery kiss

In the underwater dark,
By the clutched hair there,
The blue swimmer's lips
Coming near, I swear,
Though the Autumn is here,
That the Summer took
What it could not take.

5.

If trial and error knew
How little in the end
Matters the true blue
Or the defying, false friend,
How thin the line between
Matter and then none,
The body and the mind,
The flesh and the stone,
Then Will would be simple
And one decision ample.

6.

As the statue came alive
In the catastrophic purple,
I dug my grave
In the name of the people;
I wrestled with the stone
Till I had no name.
The statue laughed awhile
Till I struck it down,
Then I could retrieve
My flesh and bone.

7.

Relatives and friends,
A coffin is our end.
Our silhouette is thin
When the worm gets in.
(Black is the bed of green.)
Tie to your skeleton
Therefore your name,
When the wind harps on it
And you are naked to sun,
I will be as you. We will be as one.

James T. Farrell

A DAY AT THE ZOO

She sat waiting for him on a bench along a gravel path in Lincoln Park. When she saw him approaching, his gait slow and dejected, she knew that another day's effort had been in vain. They embraced, and he kissed her almost fiercely.

"I'm sorry. But I know, dear, that you'll find something very soon," she said, patting his hand.

"The fellow at the Consolidated told me to come back in two weeks. He said he couldn't promise me anything, but from the way he talked, I'm pretty sure there'll be a job for me there."

They walked slowly along the path, and her hand timidly found his. The day was muggy, but as they walked, the sun made one of its fitful appearances, and the grass and tree leaves seemed to dissolve into atoms of delicate coloring, through which a slack wind moved. During a moment when they paused in indecision, and glanced about, she assured him that something would happen.

"I know from the way that fellow at the Consolidated talked that I'll get something there in the next couple of weeks," he said.

"My darling boy," she said, squeezing his hand.

The sun sank behind dun clouds, and the park again deepened into a solid green that was set against the grayness of the day. They walked on, filling empty minutes with trivial words of affection and hope. Having walked a distance, they sat on a bench, and were silent. Both their gazes were directed through a frame of trees where a stretch of grass billowed into shrunken shrubbery which met the dark, downward curve of the low sky.

"Isn't it grand," she mumbled absently.

"I like it here," he said.

"I don't care even if you haven't got any job. I'm happy," she told him with forced hope.

"People sometimes get that way," he said, gloomily.

They kissed, and then sat listening to the domestic chirpings of the many sparrows, and to the birds singing behind them in a group of trees. A pert bluebird hopped from under their bench and moved sleekly across the path. They watched it disappear in back of bushes on the other side of the path.

"I wish we could go away and not have to worry about work, and not have to worry or be bothered about other people, and be just alone in New York, or Paris, or some other place," she said, wistfully.

He wished so too. He wished that he could get a job. He studied his shoes, old, the heels run down, the soles almost worn through.

"But I don't care. I love you, and I'm happy. I know that something will happen," she said.

The sun exploded through the clouds, dispelling the tree shadows that had crossed their faces.

"It would be just gorgeous to have a little money, and go away and not be bothered by anything or anybody," she said.

"We never get over being bothered by something," he responded.

"But if we could, I just wouldn't care. I wouldn't care what happened, and I wouldn't care if I had your baby then."

"Maybe you'd change your mind."

"I wouldn't," she said, with coy alarm and playful mock indignation.

She wondered aloud about naming the baby, and since he showed no interest in the naming, she pouted. Then, in order not to hurt her feelings, he indulged her by playing a game of naming their expected baby.

Pigeons waddled here and there on the gravel and the grass like corpulent, sloppy housewives; they suddenly moved into short flights with a loud flapping of wings. From the distance, they heard the care-free echoes of playing children. A misfit couple passed them, the woman's stomach swollen in pregnancy, her face large and coarse. The man was small and untidy, and his insignificant personality seemed to be concentrated in his small and cocky upper lip moustache. They were quarreling and he was telling her that what she needed was a good bust in her snout. She elevated her nose, and loudly declaimed that she would just like to see him laying as much as a little finger upon her, and if he did, she would show him, and show him plenty. In reply, he seemed to concentrate a complete expression of his self-imagined strength of character in the single word, "Yeah!" They passed from hearing.

"We won't ever fight like that?"

"No, darling."

"If we did, there wouldn't be any use of *us* going on."

He nodded his head, and lit a cigarette. She started to cry.

"I don't want to swell and be ugly like her. I don't want to swell like that, and have you not care any more for me."

He patted her tenderly, and she smiled.

"I don't care. I'm glad I'm going to have your baby," she said.

He told her, self-consciously, that his luck would change, and he'd get a job, and then everything would be all right. And they'd get along, and be able to take care of themselves and their expected baby.

An old woman, weighing no more than eighty or ninety pounds, limped along the path. Her skin was sallow and wrinkled, and she wore

a tattered blue coat and an antique hat with ruined artificial flowers dangling from the crest.

"I'm never going to grow old like that," she said.

"Everybody grows old," he answered.

"I won't. We won't get old like that. And after I have your baby, I'll be thin again, and you'll have a job and be able to buy me some pretty dresses," she said insistently.

He leaned toward her and kissed her.

A gray haired, gray moustached man with a black patch over his right eye moved aimlessly by. His fat body seemed to have been sucked of its energy, and he was like a run-down automaton in a caricatured coating of dried flesh. A squirrel shied towards them, but receiving no food, it skirted away, and shot up an oak tree.

"I love you, and I know you'll find something and get to be somebody," she said.

"I just feel that I'm going to land something pretty good, soon. I feel it's stacked in the cards. Today, I tried, but it was just a bad day. Every day can't be bad. There's a law of averages. Even if times are hard, I'll get something. I got to. And old Stahl hadn't any right laying me off. I always did my work for him. But maybe it was for the better, because this proposition at the Consolidated looks better than anything I had working for Stahl. I would have just rotted away there, anyway," he said.

"I know it, dear."

She brushed aside a tear, and sang the chorus from a popular song. From a distance, they heard the humming motors of automobiles and the swish of moving tires. These noises seemed like distractions from another world, a world where people struggled, fought, starved, died. For the present, they felt themselves to be away from that world. They smiled at each other. They heard a grinding of ungreased brakes, and she shuddered, and then, there was no noise except the soft slight sounds of the summer wind.

"Dear, we never had a honeymoon. I want to go away and have a honeymoon, away from everything," she said.

"Well, if I get this job at the Consolidated, and we are careful and save, maybe next year on my vacation, if of course I get one, we can go away for a few days."

"But I want to go away before that, and have just *us*, and not our baby, and be happy alone with you."

"It would be nice. Well, someday we will. I'm not dumb, and somebody'll have to give me a job. This can't go on," he said.

"We wouldn't care about anything then because we'd be happy, wouldn't we?"

The sun again came out from the clouds and raked the park. A nursemaid dragged a crying baby along. A mother followed, and the baby at her side was describing an Uncle Joe as a saphead. The mother slapped the baby, and it bawled loudly.

"We won't raise our baby like that. She's horrid."

"Yeah," he said abstractedly.

"And on Sundays you'll take it out, and we'll have a buggy and you'll wheel it?"

He nodded.

"It's going to be part of *us*, and we'll be good to it, and you'll make the formula for its milk all the time?"

He sat there, and watched a passing parade of people while his girlish wife chattered on. Some boys, with fishing poles, their voices rough, their language uncouth, passed. And clean little girls beside bored stout mothers or nursemaids. Old men hobbling and shouting political commonplaces into mutually deaf ears. Lonely-looking middle aged men and women. Loud talking, gesticulative foreigners. Louder Americans. They continued sitting. Then growing oppressed and worried, she again started to cry. He looked away, clenching and unclenching his fists, tightening his lips, telling himself silently, that *jesus*, *jesus christ*, something had to happen.

"Something has got to happen," he said to her.

"I'm terribly worried, honey."

"Let's walk on," he suggested.

They wandered on towards the Lincoln Park Zoo. A husky young fellow with an opened shirt collar, and a gaudy girl chewing gum passed them; as they passed, the girl was saying:

"He's chump. Chump! He took me to the Kit Cat, and you know Charlie, the sap spent ten bucks on me. He's chump. And then, comin' home, he thought he was going to get fresh with me, so I just pushed his hands away, and looked at him, and I sez, 'Listen whatchuh think I am? Huh?' I tol' him to keep his hands where they wouldn't get him into no trouble, because Charlie, I'm true to you."

They walked slowly, passing an over-dressed stout woman who cooed at the pigeons and fed them peanuts. Approaching the zoo, they got whiffs of animals' odors and manure. Their first sight at the zoo was of a white peacock with a long and magnificent fan. It crouched in the corner of a rectangular, sandy-floored outdoor cage, surrounded by a harem of three. A child fed cracker jack to other peacocks and a turkey in the cage. This one squatted in its pride, and disdained eating.

"We'll have to take our baby, when it's old enough, to see this peacock, he'll love it," she said as they moved along.

"Yes, and you know, I was just thinking, I might go back and see

Stahl. Maybe he can take me back in the fall, if business picks up."

A flat-footed and tired mother walked by them, her son pulling her forwards like a healthy puppy straining at the leash. He was shouting for her to hurry so that he could see the elephant.

"Our baby isn't going to grow up like that nasty boy," she said.

"No," he said with little interest.

"Ours is going to be different."

"Some people don't train their kids right," he said.

They watched the bears, housed in an open cage, stone-walled on three sides, with iron spikes to prevent them from climbing out. The fourth side was barred, and they stood looking through the iron bars. A path ran parallel to the one they took, and was elevated on the other side of the cages, permitting people to look down at the animals. People were clustered on this path, watching a group of boys teasing one of the grizzly bears. The boys made repeated motions to throw peanuts. The grizzly rose on its haunches and spun around, slowly waving its paws, waiting, begging. When the boys finally moved on, the grizzly circled the cage moving at a slow but steady pace. Someone began throwing peanuts to him, and he performed his trick of spinning around and waving his paws.

The odors were slight because of the open air and an increased wind that had now come from the nearby lake. They moved along the line of cages. In the last bear cage, there were some polars. The cage was sprayed from a pipe, elevated about seven feet. One of the polar bears was bathing. It walked backward through the falling water, swaying its shoulders, setting its paws down flat-footedly on the stone floor. With a repetition of movements it walked forward again to the other end of the cage, and repeated its backward path through the spraying water. Its mate squatted, and watched the people from above, waving its right paw every time it saw anyone making the gesture of throwing a peanut to it.

"Darling, let's feed it some peanuts?" she said.

"We hadn't better waste any money. We only got about eight dollars to last us until I get a job."

"But it's so cute, the way it begs for peanuts."

"It has enough to eat."

"It would only cost a nickel, and I know that you'll get a job tomorrow."

They hurried to a nearby stand for peanuts, returned, and fed these to the polar bear. The other bear continued to walk backward through the spray, until the monotonous repetition of motion became terrifying to watch. They moved on.

Catching a whiff of animal odors, they noticed some sleeping red foxes, and a gray and graceful timber wolf, which ran light-footedly in

a circle. Across on the other side, they came to the domed, shaded cage where alligators lazed in a dark green pool, and on the cool, damp stone island in the center of the small pool. Several boys were watching eagerly, betting pennies as to which of the alligators would move first.

They went forward to see the elephant. It was quartered in a barred and extensive stone square; the odors of straw and feed and manure emanated from the cage. The elephant stood under an iron shed in a corner, tossing straw on its back, swinging its trunk evenly and rhythmically. They called, and it jogged toward the fence. They dropped peanuts outside the bars, and it gathered them in its trunk, and swung two or three at a time into its mouth. When they began dropping empty shells, it turned away from them, jogged back under the iron shed, and resumed its preoccupation of tossing straw over its back.

They walked on. The sun had again appeared, and died behind the clouds. They moved past the red brick structure which housed lions, and they heard a steady succession of roars. Across from this building, a lone seal was perched on a rocky elevation, crying with a monotony that seemed to grow into them, until they became terror-stricken by the lonely monotony of the cry.

They crossed a driveway and stood debating whether or not they should spend money for a bite to eat. She thought not, but he was impelled by a mood of sudden recklessness, and insisted that he would get a good job any one of these days. They entered the refectory, and found seats by a window.

"It's nice here," she said.

He nodded. They lit cigarettes.

"But sometime, we'll be old like the people in the park, and we'll die."

"Yes," he said with repressed bitterness.

"We'll die and be buried in a coffin, and it'll be cold under the ground."

"I think that by fall, things ought to be better and Stahl might take me back, if I don't get that Consolidated job. But I kind of feel I'll be getting it, or something better in the next week or two. I feel it in my bones. Today was just an unlucky day."

"Darling, if I die having your baby, you'll take care of it, and be good to it, and give it things?"

"Honey, please. . . ."

"But you will. Tell me you will!" she persisted.

He nodded, and then gazed out the window. The sun had disappeared again. He turned, and in back of her, he watched a crochety, nervous old man lifting a glass of Cola Cola with a palsied hand.

"I know I'll get something," he said.

After eating, they arose, and he paid at the desk, regretting the money he had so foolishly wasted.

"Darling, I'm not fat and swollen yet?" she asked.

"No," he answered absently.

He took her arm as they crossed the driveway; they walked toward a park exit.

"I'll get something. You see if I don't. I'll get a better job and everything's going to be all right."

"I know you will. I have faith in you," she said, turning aside to hide a sudden tear.

Vivienne Koch

THE PROMISE

What's promised is premised in my demise.
The record of my death can be played on both sides.
The needle is shiney, steel, ever-lasting.
The discs move against it to their own time.

It is not mine; I hang breathless
In the ridged crevices counting
The promise peaked in each fissure
Swirling in circular grooves of disaster.

Faster and faster from the brusque box
Breaks the grim laughter of enemy
Drums. The green-tipped shaft hums
Deep into the curved circle of my central wish.

I know, know, know the pledge of sound is false.
Its lying hopped-up beat is thunder in my heart.
I am ground apart by the deadly current.
The cone's final twirl vibrates the end,
The rushing treadle truncates the frail platter
Carves shards, shattered, small, sweet lies,
Tin-tunes against the absolute orchestral unction
I am denied.

T. Weiss

KENNETH PATCHEN AND CHAOS AS VISION

With multiplicity spawning in our world through the development of knowledge, to many thinkers and artists disunity as an idea and even a practice becomes increasingly tantalizing. Knowledge is a dangerous love-affair; more than an awareness of the world outside us, knowledge is the awareness one being gains of itself from another. As these awarenesses increase, with their jealous claim for attention, their insistent distraction from unity, they hem us in. Disunity does indeed appear the major temptation and the only unity we can know. What is mortal man that he should remain forever faithful to a single, rather drab unity, when a Broadway of sirens are peddling their most alluring wares.

Of course we have seen counter-movements to such disunity in the sudden commitment of not a few frightened intellectuals to mysticisms of at least fifty-seven varieties and in the desperate plunge of others into more conventionally established religions. As empires collapse and atomic warfare threatens, the never-never-land of the spirit seems to provide the only balmy island not yet invadable. But the rugged individualists among us still hold out. Religion does tempt many; it must be religion, however, of a personal description, a kind of private or solipsistic mysticism. So, save for the monotone of their voices, they flout unity and, hating multiplicity once it seems to get out of hand, strive to emulate the amorphousness, the clutter, and the inexplicability of the world they see. One of the few miracles of their work is that it should have any beginning and end at all. In any event, each has his vociferous pique at a world clearly badly off and generally indifferent to him to supply his flabbiness with some delusion of unity and form. As Henry James has happily put it: "The seer and speaker under the descent of the god is the 'poet,' whatever his form, and he ceases to be one only when his form, whatever else it may nominally or superficially or vulgarly be, is unworthy of the god: in which event, we promptly submit, he isn't worth talking of at all." Perhaps these writers aren't worth talking of at all. Yet the extent to which disintegration has become the eager and paramount theme of our time, incidentally scattering the glimmers of exceptional talent some of these writers have shown, makes me believe that perhaps now this vast flaunting of formlessness does very much concern us.

The prose of Kenneth Patchen, by its very extremism, its blatant embracing of a position at bottom absurd, most transparently reflects this flabbiness. A writer like Franz Kafka,¹ say, was occupied with the un-

1. In the Franz Kafka critical volume put out by New Directions, an essay

rational so omnipresent in our world; but having established its presence, he at once prosecuted it rigorously and rationally. Later writers keep the rational, but approach it loosely, disjointedly, unrationally—another name for apathy, superciality, and fear which has triumphed. Then we have one mad hodgepodge of reason: whimsy, absurdity, and reason disguised as its own superior or a “vision” little more than rootless fantasy; in this frenzy of writing, one quality is certainly not to be told from another. The writers, not their world, are responsible for the palsy and shell-shock they encounter everywhere. The confusion inheres in their art. In short, these men lack the aesthetic mastery of a Kafka. They fail to see that though it be a little perverse to be aesthetic about morality, we must at least be moral about our aesthetics. That is, in the intensity and realization of his art, the writer must present his experience as deeply and fully as he can. If an artist be observant, intelligent, honest, no age—savage as it may be—can, short of destroying him, frustrate these qualities or wrest them from him. On the contrary, such writers have encouraged the deterioration of prose. Thinking that by such renting of the usual texture of style, they are uncovering godlike areas of expression hitherto unseen, they would surpass their period, find a language for its greatest incoherence. According to Patchen, “every doggerel has its day.” The nakedness of their confusion becomes acutely and painfully clear.

Kafka, recognizing the confusion a Dostoevsky, who regales us with the depths of confusion his characters occupy, lacked Dostoevsky’s frame of faith. Of course, without such a frame confusion becomes more difficult, and more difficult to describe. But Kafka still maintained an artistic control. In work like Patchen’s *The Memoirs of a Shy Pornographer*,² even the artistic frame has been smashed. Hoping that it may turn up a sensational face, Patchen cajoles chaos. The jetsam of war asserts itself—bits of faces and limbs like paper, wood, straw—through the sewers of his mind. Dostoevsky knew the importance of blood, the occasional need for its letting. But this phlebotomy, not for its own sake as it now has become, was essential to the integrity of his story. Kafka, in turn, introduced the unknown, that which stubbornly refuses to be digested or arranged into human meaning; yet he was artist enough to hold this material even as he included it; the scope of his art was large enough for it. The Patchens have chiefly the confusion swarming like triumphant barbarian hordes over these writers’ understanding. Art, to be worthy its name, must be a kind of league of nations, large enough to

of mine, entitled “Franz Kafka and the Economy of Chaos,” discusses Kafka’s art, particularly his refusal to submit to chaos.

2. New York: New Directions. \$3.00.

provide breathing space for (and thereby assimilating) the jostling contrary countries of experience. The artist, remaining intact, must prove ample enough to welcome all that he sees and, welcoming, to naturalize it into his own. The variety is preserved, but oneness emerges, a unity and community which thrives on the mixture of differences in its midst.

In poetry Patchen has produced important work. But even his poetry, in his apparent adulation of whatever he does, mirrors a failure to be self-critical. Of course, shrugging his shoulders,³ Patchen may say, Is it my fault if the reader is devoid of sufficient vision to realize that everything looked at correctly contains greatness? But Patchen's prose style, even as it normally defies the name *style*, artfully defies a search for significance. Patchen plays up the uniqueness of his work; amazed at his difference, he proclaims it wherever he can. He is more interested in shouting about his secrets, his grandeur, than in presenting them fleshed in action. Is he afraid someone may not at once realize his uniqueness?

From his first book—poems committed to an outlook professedly not his own—to his second, Patchen leaped several light years. The reaction proved so strong, however, that excess, softness, and an all-around self-indulgence set in. Chafing under the restrictions of the ideology his first work seemed to accept, he dumped that ideology for the preachments of his own personality. The revolution might have proved a thoroughly fortunate one had it brought with it an intensified consciousness of the responsibilities such a new position entailed. Instead, anything that entered the circle of his eye, sharing the light his glance gilded, breathing the air he breathed, instantly became an object of adoration. Pluming himself on his mystical freedom, he began to achieve the anonymity and, for us, the emptiness the "perfect" or the wholly open personality must be. In Milton's words: "In narrow room Nature's whole wealth." As Patchen moved from his second book to his third and fourth, this flaccidity grew.

Then, presumably, the physical confines of poetry began to chafe Patchen; he took to the roominess of prose. And the few walls he encountered came quickly tumbling down. The placenta, rather than the birth, found expression. Patchen has been seduced by the savor of his own gifts; instead of being grateful and humble before the delights of his senses, he has arrogated the credit to himself. Men like Patchen and Henry Miller at his worst are collectors of themselves; everything they do and say they believe holy. Such belief, were its meaning appreciated

3. As he does in his *Memoirs*: "'Oh, Patchen—nobody takes him seriously,' one of them said. 'He's just a rough-neck who never grew up.' 'He's just a boring child—a lot of noise about nothing,' another said. 'Patchen missed the boat,' Mr. Brill said. 'He made the mistake of thinking a poem was a sort of garbage pail you could throw anything into and a lot of time he certainly went beyond the pale altogether.'"

and approached with care and humility, could be true, as true for Miller and Patchen as it is for all. Contrariwise, these writers tend to confuse themselves with their most avid disciples who lust for a piece of the sainted one, a relic, a bone, a hank of hair or at least a dirty handkerchief.⁴ Do I tie my left shoe first? Do I take coffee with my cream? Supernal facts. Their egotism, blubbing over into their work, obliterates it, becomes the work. Kafka served his art; they try to make "art" serve them, their insatiable appetite for self-expression.

As they blur into the superficial portrait their followers have painted of them, in the fat of the spirit, discernment is smothered—discernment, reason, sensitivity. Instead of discovering relationship, in the world, they come to think of themselves as that relationship, the very cohesiveness of heaven. What once served them now crams their senses, gluts their thinking, blinds their vision. The world with all its properties is an excuse for them, a ramifying opportunity for them to expose their dirty wash. As though the voice of the bewildered multitude, they preserve the chaotic and the fragmentary, worship these even as, unable to digest their experience into art, they can only rail at disunity. Starved for the "answers," they snap at the problems. But since the world insists on being opaque, these writers, lapsing into a shrillness and licking their bruises, simply enough thereafter begin to revere themselves. The confusion is consummate. They cannot see how different they would have to be, were they godly. God could not, would not, worship Himself. Without form or discipline, then, self pretends to be form. And it damns everything not itself.

In his low opinions of our Waste Land, Patchen does kick up high jinks. One of Eliot's louder descendants, child of a father self-avowedly senile, he manages to fall with a thump. It is as though the worst elements in Whitman were to take after Eliot and the aridity. In fact, Patchen is so strident against our society and its lunacies, he has gone lunatic in defiance, and the wilderness proliferates in his voice. For all his denigration of Eliot, Patchen, carrying on the heritage of *The Waste Land* by expanding its more suspect passages, has borne its dubious fruits. That poem already witnessed the price poetry must pay in unity and meaning for the poet's flirting too much, and on its own terms, with chaos. Yet this error in approach is what Patchen is now chiefly employing. To present chaos, one must be chaotic! It is, of course, not necessary for a poet to take a positive attitude toward his world; in his day his world may be (at least for him) at its maddest, and he may say so; and that may be as much as he says. We cannot require "solutions" from our artists, only presentations, the world kept in solution. But even as

4. Patchen, amusingly enough, in *The Happy Rock*, an anthology of homage to Miller, entreated Miller to scrap such homage-givers.

he presents a deranged world, he ought not to make the fatal error of attempting to emulate that madness. Mad and bewildered as his world may be, he must hold on with as much strength as he possesses to his own integrity and humanity and equally to the humanity and integrity of his art.

What both Patchen and Miller seem to ignore is that we cannot deny the entire, existing world, its pattern, its traditions, its values, without then suggesting some substitutes. "Satire by hallucination" is the description offered of Patchen's literary method in *The Memoirs*; more accurately, satire is Patchen's hallucination. What satire can there be without conviction, without some anchorage of standards, some larger context that will stand undisturbed by the detonations. Whatever talents one may have, if he is Samson-blind, he will pull the world down upon his own head as well as upon his enemies.

The trouble lies in Patchen's insistence that he "think." The messianic urge has devastated endless abilities; in berating one's world for its philistinism, one does run the danger of cultivating a philistinism of one's own. Miller, for instance, has a narrative power that need defer to no one in our time. But as soon as Miller, remembering his responsibilities as a prophet, pushes his narrative aside and engages in philosophical or didactic discourse, he customarily reveals an intellectual innocence or an obsession with societal evils any fairly thoughtful individual recognized and deplored many years ago. Not that I am turning on myself by deprecating this desire to think. On the contrary, it would be commendable had it origin in background other than the immediate, spontaneous responses and, not infrequently, petulances of the writer. Apparently these men are not wholly convinced of the efficacy of the art they should be practising. Otherwise they must understand that experience, artistically reported, as on occasions they have done, is already an imaginative act of the highest order and, unless they undertake long and earnest objective study of the basic knowledges, as much as can be expected of them.

Patchen has written poems of tenderness and delicacy. But he too has felt an urgency to a wider, more provocative genius; Jeremiah is his desideratum also. Ironically, the weakness in his work is that he is mainly a moralist. From the aesthetic point of view such a role is corruption. As soon as art capitulates to outspoken sermonics, yields to the press and persuasion of the conditions of life, it ceases to be art. Even by pausing to argue for or to defend itself, art has lost part of its birthright. It is the absurdity of an Arnold waxing Hebraic for the Hellenic attitude, losing in his very plea for it that serene commodiousness which endeavors to see life steadily and whole. Even intensity needs room to tighten up in. Convicted by conviction, such a writer hardens and diminishes his world as he diminishes and hardens his mind.

Patchen has tried to avoid such one-sided shrillness by keeping his lilies loud and his deer incessantly capering. In his poems the fountain of flood soon began to flow next to a playground of finicky faun. Intrigued by this daring contrast, in his prose he has succeeded in persuading the dear little animals, of colors to make technicolor green with envy, to leap in and out this always fattening fountain. With every myriad repetition, they grow more and more sticky. These flora and fauna of wish are as impressive, dense, active, realistic as his falsetto one-dimensional tirades against his world. It is the gurgling cry of the drowning man; find what art you can in such expression. The fact of his writing, the material of his art's world, is normally sleazy, ill-considered if at all, put forth like the moth-eaten *Robe* to contain an idea. And threadbare as the fact is, so ragged the idea must be. In his best work, usually love poems, Patchen remembers the bodies these expressions must have. Not seldom, however, the memory of warmth, of love, is refrigerated; then, desperate, these left-overs take to the old standbys of bells, lilies, and rabbits. As for the polemics, often the sputter is so great Patchen has not patience even for his most conventional clothes. Like a house afire, he dashes out shouting-mad and stark-naked. Persuaded, first of his greatness and, second, of the world's depravity, he no longer troubles to share the former or to prove the latter. It is only depravity that makes proof necessary. But since the world is hardly innocent, the Patchens gain little by merely berating it.

As the extremes of delicacy and toughness prosper in his work, they weaken each other and break this work in two. To use his own words: "It seemed that I moved in a world where everything was beautiful and horrible." No doubt his *Memoirs of a Shy Pornographer* intends to take the bull by the horns in having his main character Albert Budd announce in purest, snow-driveled innocence, "I write pornography." The point to be stuck by is that Budd is an unqualified naif who, seeing the world nakedly, is looked on by us remaining sinful folks as a pornographer. The asterisks crowding this book with their mischievous cherub-flirting eyes clearly indicate that this is autobiography.⁵ For this book is all about this book and Patchen's writing. Incidentally he writes off not a few debts and grudges against writers and magazines. As the Agent's friend, George Arliss, describes the book Budd has written, "Good? Next to this St. Francis taught the birds bad habits, see. That's why you're a monster." And perhaps Patchen is right; what warrant have we for ascribing our squalor to him?

5. As we learn, in heaven the four-letter words are the ones treasured. "Up here all we want are the ones [words] they left out down there—Just let me tell you, The Four Letter Press's going to come through with a simply heavenly edition."

Such work, briefly, calls not so much for a willing suspension of disbelief as for a will-less suspension. In *The Trial* Kafka has said, "It is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary." Budd tells us, ". . . we can only believe in what we do not understand, for the rest of it required no belief—but only an acceptance of what we already know." But this definition might well involve belief in the whole world. For as the book later points out:

What is meaning . . . *when there is no meaning*—What is to be . . . *when there is nothing at all to understand*—What are we to say . . . *when there is nothing at all to be said*—What are we to live . . . *when there is no life*—How are we going to die . . . *when we can't even believe in death*—

But surely Patchen does not mean that he "understands" death? For as his next lines go:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE!
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DIE!

Questions the reader recognizes Patchen's rhetorical right to after some 220 pages of such goings-on. For "the world has broken to pieces in my hands."

The last chapter, written in heaven (Budd's Dante all rolled into one, no doubt; for we discover devils in this heaven: "‘WHY NOT?’ Mr. Zogar said. ‘CAN YOU IMAGINE GOD SAYING TO HELL WITH THEM?’"), is the most amusing of all. Heaven, it seems, is a reverse earth, what the sky sees and yearns for. In language this section must sound like Joyce at the tail-end of a binge, a whimsical revery in which books make people, and everyone is being polished and framed. Unfortunately a bit of quaint heaven does not make an earth, and a drift of cloudy fluff certainly does not make a book, just as the pages in a book cannot by themselves guarantee the creation and presence of people.

This doggerel, we see, has had its day too completely. Kafka also undertook an "Investigation of a Dog"; he appreciated how much the creature was imprisoned by the acuity of its sense of smell, but he did not therefore attempt to blow its barkings into divinity. Pray God such latterday doggerels have a short day. But let not the Van Wyck Brooks and the Adams take comfort from these remarks. I am in no sense picking up the musty blanket-charge of irresponsibility. On the contrary, had the writers I have described in any way participated in the patience and consecration to their art of those—the Prousts, the Gides, and the Joyces—usually charged with irresponsibility, I would never have undertaken this paper. For it is in such devotion that the artist discovers the unity his work must have. The tradition of Whitman, in its infatuation with discovery,

unless it come upon someone with the genius of Crane (and even then we finally must admit the failure of trying to express the niceties of an Eliot with the bravura of a Whitman), in our time is likely to meet with little success. Experience can no longer be remarked alone with awe; it needs to be assimilated and ordered. True, the artist should elicit the manyness, the multiple density, of experience. But that manyness, so that the pieces in company can collaborate, must relate to, must grow out of some one root. Otherwise the manyness breaks down into the isolation of a madhouse and neighboring experiences are worlds apart. For such work, in artistic oneness only can multiplicity prosper. Of course, despite his myriad, bristling harangues, there is always the chance that Patchen is to be taken at his opening words: this book is "An Amusement"; "in which event," as James had it, "we promptly submit, he isn't worth talking of at all"—only laughing.

John Gould Fletcher

WHAT THE DEAD CAN TEACH

*To the memory of Geddes Mumford, born Brooklyn,
New York, 5th July, 1925. Killed on active service
in Italy, 13th September, 1944.*

A summer afternoon. The grass was high and still;
The elm-trees hung above the neat street of the town.
In the long afternoon the world ran slowly on
As a stranger came—one who had not a home.
The upland of York State awaited, cool
And lifeless, but with air made clean after the brassy streets;
And here were friends; full of warm hope and kind,
To greet him there, as he beat back the last of his defeats.

Here was a boy, too; just turned six years old;
Full of dawnlike wonder that comes to sons of men
Who have in them so much to share, aware
Of the world opening, the world that comes not again.
Taken from paven city-ways, he deeply sensed the charm
Of a wide country-side; high grass and sheaflike trees.
The rows of newly-planted, tasseling bantam-corn;
In heart these things were his, and he was part of these.

I see the boy still. Like a colt set free,
He races around the house, he shouts and yells;
With the wild drive that is given to sons of liberty
Sons of no other land than this—a land where daylight falls
Like a sword, setting apart the glare and the great shade.
The stranger shrank from him, I think—for he had known, too long,
How his life had been charged so deeply with solitude, that no more
Could he be sure of stance, before youth's triumph-song.

Now much is changed. The world swept blindly past
The rapids where so many hopeless souls
Stood beaten, cowed. And out of hate and lust
Whipped to white fury, once again it fell
Into the evil whirlpool. Struck then a demon's hour,
First in Manchuria, later on in Spain.
Courage was much to ask—and vision in the blind
Was far to seek. More deadly pressed the pain.

The boy, now changed to man, saw the deep night
Settle upon the mountain. By a grim ravine
He stopped and stared, his rifle ready and the sight
True-poised, he tensely waited as the scene
Sombered beneath a cloud. Far, far away
A soft owl hooted, a dog barked. What stirred there, foe or friend?
A machine-gun suddenly spat. The bullet's way
Ran swift. In the beginning was the end.

We who have never seen the moon shine full
On tangled corpses, writhing shapes, nor known
Horror succeeding sacrifice; where, cool,
The high spring brings us briars deeply strewn
With starry bloom, know there is no return
For these our dead, but as we take their doom
To find therein the thought they might have held
Had deeds been fully done and burdens all laid down.

Only on our renunciation, rests our glory.
We see it, heed it, feel it. Yet shall we turn aside
To make their memory mockery, their deaths a jeering story?
Then better were they all, because they died.
Only by taking his burden, can once more
Some boy be brought back. Thus we may have new speech
With him and through him, on this dwindling shore
Where we have come to learn what he returns to teach:

And since no power has given us strength to go
Up that grim Appennine where he yet sleeps,
We know precisely what he have come to know;
That in our daily acts, he inly keeps
The promise unfulfilled. The peace that must be willed
Will dawn for us when through such deaths is done
Full justice, and more hope, for all a share
Of the unsavaged earth. Such peace is yet unknown.

B. Rajan

A PERFECT COUNTRY

Death has not come to this country.
These perfect hills were never gentle with sin.
They did not know the drumming of the autumn,
Red with the flaw of love's experience.

But also in this country
Grown out of time, grown deathless in enormity,
Your words, set down into a snare of violence,
In all crime find their cadence testified.

And darkening into a crimson stillness
The blood creeps softly, sedulously in.
Do you dream then of heaven or of hell
When the muscles of the cliff close in around you?

Or do you dream of the hill's immaculate pattern
And the expectancy of eager years?
Do you dream of a heart inviolate, merciless
That was not hammered into calm and pity?

An Eden never lost is never known.
The white tombs of its sure and settled logic
Tell of all action murdered into stillness
While day eats out each island with disaster

While only the desolate baying of the blood
And vengeance steals across your private country
Whose clear perfection finds your death unknown.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

John Sutherland

LETTER FROM CANADA

Your request for a letter from Canada is particularly appropriate at the present time, when Canadian writing has been experiencing a marked revival, after a long period of inactivity. Five years ago there would have been little to report. There had been some half-hearted attempts to modernize the nature tradition—in the work of Anne Marriott and W. W. E. Ross—and the “Montreal Poets” had caught something of the tone of modern poetry and too much of its recurrent anaemia. Prose had struck an absolutely dead level. I should have had to say that, by and large, Canadian writing remained under the spell of standards and ideas which had outlived their usefulness a hundred years ago. But now that situation has greatly altered.

A factor in the change has been Canada's part in the war, and the effect this has had on English and American opinion. Canadians take an interest in creative writing chiefly for snobbish reasons: because an English or American critic praises a book they feel duty-bound to read it. Ralph Gustafson's *Little Anthology of Canadian Poetry* (New Directions), and his anthology in the Penguin series, (neither very carefully chosen nor really representative), sold well and received considerable critical attention; so did his *Canadian Accent*, published in England and still not available in Canada. Professor Smith's *Book of Canadian Poetry*, brought out two years ago by the University of Chicago Press, was big and formidable enough to impress scholarly circles and achieve its own kind of reputation. These successes of Canadian writing abroad have influenced the conservative publishers here, and helped to produce the recent flurry of publication.

There has, in fact, been a spate of new books. Poets like E. J. Pratt, Earle Birney, Dorothy Livesay, Anne Marriott, A. M. Klein, Gustafson, and some lesser-known people, have all published new volumes of verse in the past two years. There have been first volumes by F. R. Scott and A. J. M. Smith, and by new poets like Patrick Anderson, Irving Layton, Raymond Souster, and Miriam Waddington. A new anthology, *Unit of Five*, devoted to five poets under thirty, was more interesting as well as more contemporary than those published abroad. E. K. Brown's *On Canadian Poetry* advanced new interpretations of some of Canada's literary “greats.”

Brown's book, concentrating on the traditional figures, containing thumb-nail sketches of those no older than middle-aged, and failing even to mention the younger poets, indicates that the lag in our publishing and our criticism has not been eliminated. A conservative taste has been at work behind the scenes, and has chosen to publish the "safer bets," those whose work was not so remote from the banal that it would not receive some popular approval. It is most unfortunate that a poet like Pratt, whom a reviewer in *Poetry* fairly describes as "one hundred and fifty years behind the times," should be advanced here and in the United States as the leading Canadian poet. It is also unfortunate that poets like Birney, Smith, and Klein, whose poetry would have been considered "experimental" fifteen years ago, should be labelled *avant-garde*, while genuinely experimental and exciting work by Anderson, Layton, Souster, and P. K. Page is almost totally neglected.

These younger poets are important representatives of a distinct movement which has developed in Canada since 1940, but has so far received no critical recognition. As contrasted with the nature tradition, which was implicitly religious in thought and feeling, the new poetry has an emphatic social bias. Marxist, and also Freudian in its thinking, it concerns itself with the individual and the relation of the individual to society: it draws heavily on Auden and Spender for ideas, on Barker and Dylan Thomas for technique. It cannot immediately alter our literary colonialism, but its emphasis on the social environment, and sometimes the specifically Canadian environment, contributes a realism which has so far been lacking. Canadian poetry, at its best, has never been more than a chamber music and never adjusted itself to its surroundings. Some of us feel that a beginning is now being made, and a basis laid for a genuine tradition.

P. K. Page's "Bank Strike," which I would like to quote in full, is a typical blend of social realism and metaphorical richness:

When the time came,
after the historied waiting,
they were ready with their strikers' jackets
and their painted signs "en grève,"
facing the known streets
and the rough serge knees and elbows
of the police.

Time was bald on their skins,
their desks and counters and cages
cried in their eyes like a strategical retreat
and the unrelieved picket line
had a stained, for-all-time permanence
on the distorted street.

In the foreground church
the flames of the sacred candles
burned, in their suddenly foreign homes
their meals were stiff as religious paintings
and the bullet of "fired"
was wedged in their skulls.

Yet from the cellar of certainty they came
up the long escalator to defeat,
their hearts hurting their ribs, their hands heavy;
blew hot and cold
and scratched the iron curb
like weather worrying an iron city.

Miss Page will soon publish a first book of poems. Other work by these writers has been made available by a pioneer organization in Montreal, which, referring to the Canadian scene, calls itself ironically and hopefully the First Statement Press.

Canadian prose, which has always lagged behind Canadian poetry, has nevertheless been affected by the "renaissance," and has been developing in two ways. There has been a great spurt of novels, dealing with present-day Canada, and generally attempting some social comment. Hugh MacLennan's *Two Solitudes* and Gwethalyn Graham's *Earth and High Heaven* seem to have been as widely read in the United States as in Canada, and the rights to Miss Graham's book have now been purchased by Hollywood. These are only the top names in an ever-expanding best-seller list. People have been impressed by the fact that the recent novels, unlike those of the tradition, turn to significant social problems and adopt an attitude slightly less than conservative. While this may be a matter for some satisfaction—assuring us that we can do something we had not done before—a reading of the books themselves merely suggests that the popular novel in Canada is learning the new tricks of popular novels elsewhere. As for the quantitative question—the claim that more Canadians are reading Canadian writing than ever before—the critics seem to be forgetting the popularity of Ralph Connor in the twenties and the continuing appeal of Mazo de la Roche. Not so many novels have come all in a cluster, as they have now at the war's end, but that may be a matter for despair as much as joy.

The best Canadian prose has appeared in the magazines, and remains there almost unregarded. New short stories, occasional selections from unpublished novels, show that, underneath the surface, the prose is proceeding in the same direction, and on the same level, as the poetry. Half a dozen writers possess all the social awareness, plus the imaginative power to create scene and character which the popular writers lack. Some of the poets have done excellent work in prose. Excerpts from Anderson's diary, published in *Preview* magazine, interpret the Canadian

scene in a fluent and sensitive style. Page's short stories, beginning with a subjective sensation, build up into vivid impressions of people and atmosphere; Irving Layton and William McConnell have done more traditional and more substantial work in the same medium. McConnell has a novel and a novelette—both unpublished—which I have had the opportunity to read in manuscript, and which would put the MacLennans and the Grahams to shame. Incidentally, the literary magazines—*Contemporary Verse* which first appeared in 1940, and *First Statement* and *Preview* which have combined into the new *Northern Review*—have done yeoman work by publishing the younger writers, and by providing at least one outlet for good writing of all kinds.

Nevertheless honest and intelligent criticism of this new movement is almost totally lacking. We have had little criticism in Canada, and what exists is academic in kind, nervously fingering the remains of those long-departed. If American criticism could step in and supply this lack, it would do a great service to Canadian writing. A good number of books have been published, and volumes by all the leading figures are becoming available. Your criticism, now at the height of its powers, could have a salutary effect on the Canadian writer, and strengthen his position in Canada, by giving him the attention he frequently deserves. It is regrettable that books like Layton's *Here and Now*, and Anderson's *A Tent For April* should have passed almost unnoticed in the United States.

LETTER FROM HOLLAND

It is rather difficult to write about Dutch literature for the American reader, because more often than not the latter will not be acquainted with the poetry, prose, and essays of this small country at the North Sea which is generally better known for its bulbs, cheese, dikes, etc., than for its art, except, of course, painting.

The reason for this must be found in the fact that hardly anything has been translated into English. The novels that have been published in English translation belong to the best-seller-list and consequently do not give a correct impression of modern Dutch prose. Though the really good novelists are rather scarce over here—poetry has always had a dominating position—we have writers such as S. Vestdijk, a very fertile novelist, essayist and poet who has published a novel on El Greco and several volumes of essays and poetry. He belongs to the psycho-analytical school of writers.

Following the invasion of the Nazis, Dutch literature lost its prominent prose-writers: Menno Ter Braak, the outstanding essayist, whose work ought to be known far outside the Dutch frontiers, committed suicide; Charles-Edgar du Perron, the never desisting fighter for "l'honnêteté" in art, died of a serious illness while the German bombs were falling in his neighborhood; the leading

poet H. Marsman found a watery grave when he tried to fly from Portugal to England or America; and one of our greatest poets J. Slauerhoff had died in 1936. Suddenly a whole generation was deprived of its leading personalities, whose work belongs to the best of our literature. With S. Vestdijk and the aggressive poet Jan Greshoff, now living in the U.S.A., they formed a bloc against epigonism and aestheticism.

Owing to these severe losses we have only a few important prose-writers: S. Vestdijk, F. Bordewyk, Arthur van Schendel, R. Blystra, and the younger Ferdinand Langen, and the promising essayist S. Dresden and Hans Redeker.

With the poets it is quite different. The work of a Marsman, a Slauerhoff, an A. R. Roland Holst deserves to be as widely known as the work of contemporary English, French and American poets. As far as I know, no attempts have been made to translate Dutch poetry into English. Wolfgang Cordan had published very good translations in German, just as Stefan George did, but I believe this is all and that is a great pity.

The poetry of the younger generation is less good than that of their predecessors. It is, however, perhaps wrong to pronounce a verdict now on this poetry because the younger generation has been hindered in its development by five years of German suppression. For the occupation of our country meant in the first place the imposing of Nazi ideals. The Germans tried here as elsewhere to suppress every symptom of free thought. This only resulted in a more and more stubborn resistance. All over the country small newspapers were circulated to keep the thought of freedom burning.

When the Germans began to meddle with cultural life, the Dutch poets, novelists and essayists, with only a few exceptions, stopped publishing. All at once there was no literary life any more. The booksellers could sell their old stocks, but no new books came to their cases. Still the writers had to live, and they became their own publishers. They contacted printers, they bought paper, and soon all over Holland the booksellers sold the clandestine books and booklets from under the counter in order to help the authors in their resistance. There were simple books, hastily printed on ugly paper, and there were expensive books, examples of fine printing, all in limited editions. And when peace had come and exhibitions were being held, it appeared that there were more than a thousand of them: volumes of poetry, periodicals, essays, short stories and even novels.

Soon after the coming of peace, literary life re-established itself, but it is still suffering from the disastrous years of occupation. Publishing goes badly and the writing is still worse. The general impression is that the generation now speaking has not the disposal of the great talents of previous times. Prose is undistinguished and the poetry is a minor poetry without ideals. Some exceptions can be made: the poets Bertus Aafjes, Adriaan Morrien and Koos Schuur write a fine, sensitive poetry, standing out above the average Dutch poetry of this moment.

As to Dutch painting, I am glad I can let you have better news. Of course there is still a very large group continuing to paint in the impressionistic manner. But apart from these almost forgotten "artists," we have a very large group of painters who learned from the modern movements. I say they learned from the modern movements in art because most of them are not merely adherents of one or the other doctrine. They took from expressionism, cubism, etc., what they needed to express their personalities more fully, in accordance with a modern feeling for life. Therefore their art preserves its Dutch character.

These painters do not care for the exact rendering of reality, nor for the joy of beauty of the outer form, nor for the momentary impression of color

and light, as with the impressionists. They try to penetrate the outer form spiritually and to give image to psychic values.

If one should ask me the difference between Dutch and, say, French painters, I would say that the French experiment for the sake of experiment in order to reach something definite they have in mind. With the Dutch it is otherwise. When they experiment, they do so in order to select from the results those elements that can be joined to the Dutch character. The Dutch modern painters never tried to imitate "la légèreté" of the French with happy colors and lightness of design. Their paintings are severe, "*lourde*" as the Frenchman would say.

This is the distinguishing element in those in whose work expressionistic features can be traced: H. Chabot, Charley Toorop, the late Leo Gestel, Quirijn van Tiel, etc. This is true also of the neo-realists: Carel Willink, Raoul Hijncs, Wim Schumacher, whose work is surprising because of a smooth, exact technique and a very scrupulous rendering of reality in which a pessimistic conception of life is evident.

—ANTHONY BOSMAN

BOOKS

William Peden

TWO RECENT AMERICAN NOVELS

Eudora Welty's first novel, *Delta Wedding*, more than meets the expectations of those who admire her earlier volumes of short stories. Now I am not one of those who have found it necessary to speak of Miss Welty in hushed and reverent tones only, nor do I believe that the "Mississippi marvel" (as one of her partisans has called her) can do no wrong. Even some of the best of Miss Welty's taut, nervous stories are, it seems to me, marred by a love of words for their own sake which at times approximates mere fondling or preciosity, and hampered by a predilection for indirection and obliquity of technique; these same weaknesses are occasionally present in her novel. Yet *Delta Wedding*, I think, is the best novel of this and of several other seasons. More than that, this rich and varied story of the Mississippi Fairchilds, appearing as it does in a year of gem-bespangled potboilers about titled nymphomaniacs and absurd sea captains, is a token, let us hope, of better things for the future. It is really both a pleasure and a privilege to read this book.

Essentially, what Miss Welty has done in *Delta Wedding* is to achieve the highest goal of the serious creative writer: she has succeeded in creating a cosmos of her own and has peopled it with characters who

Eudora Welty, *Delta Wedding*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$2.75.
James T. Farrell, *Bernard Clare*, Vanguard Press, \$2.75.

achieve a life above and beyond the events and time-span which constitute the framework of her novel. *Delta Wedding* is the story of one week in the lives of the Fairchilds of Shellmound in the heart of Mississippi's rich Delta country. Dabney Fairchild, daughter of Battle and Ellen Fairchild, is to be married to the family's overseer, Troy Flavin, throwing herself away to an inferior man, many of the Fairchilds feel. But with customary family loyalty, they flock to Shellmound, the plantation house where "in some room at least the human voice was never still." Shellmound is a home where some one is always running in and out of doors, or nibbling a chicken wing or eating a plum, or playing the piano, or being spanked or kissed, or waiting for something to happen or writing in a diary, or preparing for a visit or returning from one, or even fainting as Ellen Fairchild does shortly before the wedding. Yet, with all the hubbub and the general air of happy confusion, the arrival of various members of the fabulous Fairchilds, the anticipation of wondering whether the wedding cake and bridesmaids' dresses will arrive in time, the flurried preparations for rehearsals and balls, time and events really flow slowly at Shellmound—irritatingly or even maddingly slow to an outsider like Robbie Fairchild, estranged wife of George, Battle's brother and the *beau sabreur* of the family. The days are hot and long; the rains have not yet come, and the cotton fields stretch endlessly white and shimmering in the blazing September sun. Shellmound is the world and the Fairchilds are its chosen people; little Laura, almost an outsider although her recently dead mother had been a Fairchild, hits the nail on the head unknowingly when she reflects that "When people were at Shellmound it was as if they had never been anywhere else." An eldest daughter Shelley is right when she says that they are a "family that cherishes its weaknesses and belittles its strength." The Fairchilds are all intensely proud, impulsive, selfish in the grand way, resentful of intrusion; to poorly-born Robbie "all the Fairchild women indeed wore a mask." Thus it is that the past, rather than the present or the future—despite the Fairchild ability to seize the moment and wring from it its full measure of enjoyment—pervades and permeates life at Shellmound.

This is why the incident of the Yellow Dog assumes such proportions in the minds of all the major characters, Fairchilds or non-Fairchilds; why this episode from the past is referred to and reflected upon again and again, to dominate the present and to pervade the future as much as the influence of Grandfather Fairchild who was killed long ago in a duel, or of Denis who lost his life in the World War; why it becomes a symbol of the Fairchilds and their world which an outsider might dent but could never penetrate. George Fairchild, his new wife Robbie (improperly dressed, as usual, poor girl, with high heels), Dabney, Shelley, and the younger Fairchilds including Roy, Ranny, little Battle and even Bluet the baby, had been for a walk and were crossing the

trestle of the Yazoo-Delta Railroad (nicknamed the Yellow Dog) when poor cousin Maureen who was not right in her head got her foot stuck. The Yellow Dog was chugging down the track; everybody but George and cousin Maureen had jumped or been dropped safely into the creek beneath. Robbie had called George, but he had denied her, his wife, and stayed with a Fairchild. The train had stopped in time, of course, and George and cousin Maureen were safe, but Robbie knew that she had lost and the Fairchilds had won. That was why, when she and George had left the Delta and gone back to their city apartment, she had thrown the pots and pans out of the window and run away and wrecked their car in a ditch. . . . No, you can't change the Fairchilds, Ellen reflects at the dance after the wedding; it was inevitable, and right, that George act as he did; it was inevitable that Dabney marry Troy just as George before her had married Robbie; it was inevitable that in this rare moment of quiet and introspection—there was never much time to *think*, at Shellmound—Ellen, after twenty years of happy marriage with Battle, could feel, without one regret or sigh for her life with Battle, that *she* might have been the one who could have made George happy.

So, actually, in spite of the busy-ness and the activity, not much *happens* in *Delta Wedding*. A wedding, a picnic, the finding and losing of a family heirloom, eating and drinking and sleeping and all the trivia of full lives. The greatness of the book lies in Miss Welty's creation of a world and its inhabitants and their way of life, and I do not know of any American novel since *Look Homeward, Angel* which succeeds to such a degree in achieving all this. Shellmound, and the Delta, and the Fairchilds, it seems to me, are permanent additions to our prose fiction.

With *Bernard Clare*, James T. Farrell has written his best book since *Judgement Day*. He begins by having something worth saying, something important enough to compensate for his limitations as a writer, his prolixity, his lack of humor, his dead-pan seriousness. *Bernard Clare*, Farrell's version of the perennially challenging theme of the portrait of the artist as a young man, shows a real advance over novels like *Ellen Rogers* for which, frankly, I can see no excuse whatsoever. Several of the characters in *Bernard Clare* are more firmly etched than have been many of Farrell's creations since the Studs Lonigan days. More important, the best of them have a depth and breadth which set them apart from some of the one-dimensional puppets of a book like *Gas-House McGinty*. Too, Farrell seems finally to have learned the value of compression; despite some irrelevancies, *Bernard Clare* is a comparatively tight, unified book. Further, Farrell's dialogue seems better than it has been, and surprisingly enough he has written some passages which have a real lyric beauty. I am not referring to some of Bernard's Wolfean hymns to loneliness—"whirling, the whirling, churning blood of alcohol, the churning whirling alcohol of blood, whirling all alone, in loneliness,



THE POET

(Courtesy of Milch Galleries)

Victor Thall



RALSTON CRAWFORD

in the whirling, growing blackness of loneliness of drunkenness, all alone. Darkness, darkness . . . ”—which, although defensible enough as being compatible with Bernard’s frequently maudlin temperament, certainly do not add to the charm of the novel as a whole. Finally, Farrell has not lost the power which makes even his least successful works notable: the flophouse lavatory, Bernard’s encounter with a Harlem prostitute, Union Square on the night of Sacco and Vanzetti’s execution, and Bernard’s berserk valedictory at a fashionable cocktail party—quite the best thing of its kind, incidentally, that Farrell has ever done, a minor classic in the literature of drunkenness—all these are superbly handled.

Bernard Clare is, in a sense, a Studs Lonigan with literary aspirations. He is bumptious, ambitious, sensitive, crude, arrogant, tormented by an inferiority complex, loud-mouthed, awkward, consumed with an adolescent’s craving for fame and agonized by the physical craving for some woman, any woman, to make much of him. The novel depicts six months in this character’s search for literary success. Twenty-one year old Bernard has left his middle-class Chicago family and has abandoned his religion to seek his fortune in New York, searching, as his father says, “for local color and God knows what.” He fails in his desire to write words “that will explode like bombshells in this lousey world”; lulled into a sense of false security by his initial success as a salesman and in his triumphant union with a willing woman, he almost loses sight of his ambition to set down the “misery and shamefulness of this world,” to depict the lives of men like himself who “hoped in boyhood and were disillusioned in manhood.” Finally, after being apprehended by his mistress’s husband, he spurns the city which has temporarily defeated him and returns to Chicago.

Bernard Clare loses the first round, unquestionably, but we have a strong feeling (and the realization makes us, strangely enough, happy) that he will come back swinging to win on points or even score a knockout. Bernard’s truculent Irish spirit should be calmed and soothed with the knowledge that even though he didn’t write a “splendid” novel James T. Farrell, his creator, is quite likely to do so one of these days.

Frederick Hoffman

MR. LAUGHLIN'S ANTHOLOGY

New Directions 9. Edited by James Laughlin. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions Press. \$3.75.

With this issue, James Laughlin celebrates the tenth anniversary of his annual, begun, as he says, “in an enthusiastically juvenile way,” in

1936. There is one quality of number 9 which reminds one of that first issue—a serious appreciation of the need for sponsoring new writing, which has been responsible for ten years of generosity and patience on the part of its editor, and a belligerent attitude toward “the gentlemen who operate the most flagrantly commercial of our great publishing houses. . . .” With respect to the latter, the “Editor’s Notes” are illuminating, for they are anything but affable and they emphasize even more strongly than ever the trends in modern commercial publishing toward packaging and publicizing, and toward expensive advertising campaigns for works of little literary value. Laughlin protests also against the continued prostitution of popular critical taste, with its parade of superlatives for second-rate work and its discoveries of new Dantes and Shakespeares by the score. Public taste is incapable of being developed in a world where its absence is steadily assumed as an indispensable accompaniment to inflated reputations and monstrous sales records.

All of this is an excellent re-affirmation of Laughlin’s original aims. And it must be remembered that *New Directions* is not an anthology of the most noteworthy or “the best”; it is rather, as Laughlin admits, “a place for the publication of experiment and the unconventional—necessary, vitally necessary, because a healthy literary culture must be continually spading up some new ground.” And “the unconventional” shifts its position constantly, along with “the conventional”—so that we are sometimes aware of a straining after the exceptional, a self-conscious but grim determination to remain in the advance guard, no matter how moderately successful the rear guard has been in advancing itself. We need an explanation of the diverse nature and quality of Mr. Laughlin’s annuals; and it lies always in his admission that they exist and are published with what amounts to a missionary spirit.

Perhaps the most general characteristic of the present annual is the “postwar temper” of its contributors. *Avant-gardists* of the late thirties wrote of death with a lively and confident vigor; they seem now to be somewhat annoyed and embarrassed by it, and are uneasily suspicious of its being an unsatisfactory end-in-itself. Experience of death and anticipation of it are two different matters, but both have been accelerated in the last few years, and I am quite sure that they have gone beyond the limits of easy literary treatment. Add to the very natural disparateness and disjointedness of this eclectic annual the strange feeling that comes from one’s no longer being sure of the location and value of his subject, and you have a collection more than ever divided and conflicting. There are no “new” directions in the annual of experimental writing of 1946; there are, rather, comments satirical and pathetic upon old ones, plus a sampling of literature from varied sources.

Of the fiction printed in *New Directions 9*, the most noteworthy, perhaps, are stories by Robert Lowry, John Berryman, and Paul Good-

man (two of these are reprints). The merit of Lowry's story is the quality that comes originally from the tradition of *The Little Man*, the magazine which exploited the best of the Saroyanesque tradition in modern literature, without however neglecting its worst. The closely knit, poetic style of Berryman's story suggests a poet working with great success in another medium; and the satiric fantasy of Goodman succeeds almost in spite of itself, by virtue of his exaggeration of its object.

The poems of the collection are scarcely "experimental"; the more interesting of them reflect the convention of the postwar poet, who, cast adrift from Eliot and wishing no security in a world of J. Donald Adams editorials, writes of "the private act revealed and made known to the corporate eye" (William Everson), or—with tender but almost absurd pathos—of "slumber's mischievous match-making" with "indistinct beings anonymous of gender" who leave with him "the damp initial of Eros" (Tennessee Williams). Of death and love it may be said that the poets of this collection treat them with an embarrassed reserve: they are not sufficiently disabused of their significance to scoff at them, and yet they are at a loss most of the time about using them in any consistent mood. In the translations from Mexican poets, death remains comrade-heroic, though the ugly mask of death seems more vivid than the cause which made it necessary. The point of view is uncertain; and this uncertainty, I believe, is due at least in part to the accelerated pace which death has assumed in recent time—the vast unselectiveness and impartiality of death which modern science has contributed, so that it is hard for the poet to equate it with human feeling or motive, harder for him to justify it, and all but impossible for him to accept it.

the roots do not discriminate between the aggressor
and the dead child, the regrettable necessity

and the foul atrocity—the grass is objective
and turns all Citizens into green mounds—

says Alex Comfort, putting the words in the mouths of dead soldiers, who also say (and this, the great difference from the poetry of World War I) to those who might go off to World War III,

but if you choose to obey, we shall not blame you
for every lesson is new. We will make room for you
in the cold hall where every cause is just.

I should like to suggest that these poets generally suffer from an interesting kind of indifference, which is an embarrassment in the face of affirmation, a capacity for distrust of both poetic subject and poet.

Thus the conviction that the artist ought to be free of pressures alien to his nature has sometimes left him with only vagrant notions

of what he might do with such independence. But *New Directions 9* is brilliantly serviceable as a record of his embarrassment. One needs always to remember the motive for its publication, a motive re-announced by its editor and substantiated and documented in a long article by James T. Farrell on the present state and the future dangers of commercial publication. "Now less than ever should the literary artist surrender to the Philistines and to commerce," says Mr. Farrell; and Mr. Laughlin insists that the *avant-gardist* must go further than even Farrell suggests and must have more help than he ever had before.

New Directions 9 is less interested in discovering "new talent" than it is in assuring any experimental talent refuge from commercialism, no matter how tolerant commercial publishers might seem to be at the present. For this reason, most of the "new directions" are represented by old names; and of the comparatively unknown names, we might have been not too disappointed in the omission of Alice Estes. Certainly Herbert Cahoon and William Everson deserve to be heard from again. And I suspect that Henry Miller will be appearing in *New Directions 10*, and *20*, and *56*, and I shall always respond to him as I do to his essay on Rimbaud: "How good are his prejudices!"

The Air-Conditioned Nightmare. By Henry Miller. New York: New Directions. \$3.50.

Henry Miller's America is a place most of us have looked at, but not many have seen. When, about four years ago, Miller arrived here from Greece, "free of hatred, prejudice, bitterness," and resolved to have a last look at the country he wanted to leave with a good taste in his mouth, he was probably one of the few men on earth most uniquely fitted for making an evaluation of our civilization, not only by reason of his natural sensibility and power, but also because of his background. Miller's force, his eloquence, his individuality are, after all, expressions of what we still like to call "American" traits, especially since they are now so little in evidence; and the fact that a man who has been away from a country for a long time will see it more clearly when he returns than he would if he had stayed in it is, of course, a rather obvious truism. Therefore it is not surprising that when Miller came and saw and was bitterly disappointed with America he produced out of his sorrow and fear a book that is peculiarly American, and makes its readers think of such earlier polemics as *The Day of Doom*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *The Jungle*, though artistically it surpasses its predecessors by a great deal.

Miller has given his vision of America the form of a nightmare. He throws a baleful, sub-marine light over the slums of Chicago, Boston—"a vast jumbled waste created by pre-human or sub-human monsters in a delirium of greed"—Federal prisons, Hollywood parties, and the American park, a "circumscribed vacuum filled with cataleptic nincompoops." From time to time splendid or tragic or terrifying figures who have either escaped or been conquered by America move by like those of the frieze in de Quincey's nightmares. The colours are obviously intensified; the figures sometimes greater than life. But Miller's elo-

that was the day I showed alistair mcwhidden
 how to play
 butchers
 put your hand on that block
 alistair i said
 he did
 and i chopped all his fingers off
 the scoutmaster was genuinely distressed.

If the contrast between this and the previous number of *Angry Penguins* means anything, Australian literature is rapidly losing its pretentious provincialism and coming into the sphere of individual creative effort.

—WILLIAM MEAD

The Unreasoning Heart. By Constance Beresford-Howe. New York: Dodd, Mead. \$2.50.

Having read somewhere that a critic's first duty is to praise, I have been trying for weeks to think of something good to say about this novel. Here it is: the book presents an adolescent who gets somewhere. Perhaps that it is why it is being read. (Well, the local library just got it.) Any number of novels, mostly autobiographical, have shown 'teen-agers powerless in the face of life's immensity, progressing only in their capacity to be hurt; here, however, we have a sixteen-year-old girl who falls in love with a man old enough to be her father, and, by her very quality of adolescent sincerity, pries him away from a "mature" woman he has been vaguely courting for years. The theme of the book, therefore, is refreshing. Its treatment is competent in plot-structure, dialogue and character-portrayal, although the tone and manner are sometimes a bit *Ladies' Home Journal*—because of, rather than in spite of, a smattering of "bad language" ("I think she's a bitch," etc.) In short, it's a perfectly nice book, showing how adults can be thwarted by losing the absolutism of youth.

More interesting than the book is the fact that it won a prize—the Inter-collegiate Literary Award for 1945. This means that in certain persons' judgement it was the best novel written by a college student in the U. S. and Canada in a whole year. I have not read any other novel in this group, but I do not agree with that judgement. If I did, I would have bad dreams—dreams of an entire year's crop of writers unable, from their nonage, to write anything independent of the standard romantics of their time, as approved by Hollywood: able, indeed, to write only stuff that could be written from a knowledge of nothing but the movies. This book is a perfect example of such writing. It is a series of "family scenes" that remind me of all the "family movies" I have avoided: endless, vapidly friendly or cattish discussions of sons by their mothers, uncles by their nephews, husbands by their wives, etc., interspersed with "dramatic" scenes involving many ascents and descents of stairs. It is the kind of book you could write if you had never heard and did not wish to imagine any speech, feeling or thought transcending the smooth outlines and warm, rich colors of the Average Home à la Norman Rockwell. It is, in short, frightening in its very skill, its very assurance. I hope against hope that its distinction by this award is due to publishers' eternal interest in marketable wares, not to a dearth of experiment and daring among the younger generation.

—FRANK JONES

OPEN LETTER

The Right Honorable W. L. Mackenzie King
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa, Canada

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

My publishers, The Vanguard Press, of 424 Madison Avenue, New York City, have received a Memorandum from the Customs Division of the Department of National Revenue, Canada, dated May 31, 1946, informing them that the importation into Canada of my novel, *Bernard Clare*, has been prohibited. The justification for the banning of this book, as listed in the Memorandum, is "Section 13 and Item 1201 Schedule 'C' of the Custom Tariff." This document is signed by Mr. D. Sim, Deputy Minister of National Revenue, Customs and Excises.

I am taking the liberty of requesting in this open letter that this unjustified and unexplained act of censorship be rescinded, and that this unfair action against my novel be publicly investigated so that responsibility for it may be fixed and explained to the public of both the United States and the Dominion of Canada. Even though I am unfamiliar with the precise stipulations of "Section 13 and Item 1201 of Schedule 'C' of the Customs Tariff," I do not hesitate to state, without qualification, that there is nothing in my novel, *Bernard Clare*, which in any way can justify such an action. If some official has decided that my novel be banned on the allegation that it is pornographic, I would instantly answer that neither in this work, nor in any work of fiction that I have published, have I ever written one line which a fair-minded human being can, by any stretch of the imagination, term "pornographic."

Bernard Clare describes the experiences of a young man over a period of some months. It seeks in a concrete way to give an all-sided picture of the character. Thus, the novel opens with a scene in which he is trying to write in the New York Public Library. It then goes on to reveal him, and to account for his thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations in the hotels in which he lives, in his wanderings about the streets of New York, in his work as a clerk in a cigar store and as an advertising salesman, in his dissipations, in a love affair which ends tragically, in his moods of hope, idealism, and sacrificial desire, and in his fits of depression and violence.

The importation of this book into the Dominion of Canada has now been banned. This, if you will consult your files, is the second instance in which a book of mine has been banned. On May 29, 1944, I addressed an open letter to you calling your attention to and protesting the banning of my novel, *Young Lonigan*, by a Canadian Customs Official. This ban was then rescinded, and responsible officials from your government in Ottawa informed me that they had not ordered this ban. In my open letter to you of that date, I pointed out that the authorities of the Third Reich had also banned my work from American prisoner-of-war camps. Part of my letter read: "Freedom of speech is one of the Four Freedoms guaranteed by the Atlantic Charter to which the government of the Dominion of Canada has subscribed. This action of banning *Young Lonigan* is in flat contradiction with the openly proclaimed principles of Canadian officials." Now, when I am impelled once more to speak in defense of my work against unwarranted censorship, I wish to reaffirm the sentiments of this quoted statement.

In that same open letter, I wrote: "Literature is not national; it is international. The people of the world should have the right to read serious works of literature of all countries." Now, though the War is over, we find ourselves in a period of peace where there are still iron curtains in Europe, and all over the world, not only writers, but the masses generally feel choked because they are still denied true freedom. At the same time, governments, statesmen, public officials, writers, journalists, editors, legislators, philosophers, and countless others are constantly speaking out to urge international freedom of speech. In connection with the United Nations Organization, a world-wide cultural organization, UNESCO, dedicated to freedom of cultural exchanges of all kinds is now being formed. Every day our newspapers are full of expressions concerning the internationalism of culture, and the need for international cultural freedom. It is precisely in such a time that your government has come forward to ban my novel.

In my previous letter to you I pointed out that for decades the literate people of the civilized world had come to grant the serious literary artist the fundamental right to "deal with the phenomenon of life frankly and objectively." And I drew from this fundamental right, the following conclusion which holds concerning *Bernard Clare*, in precisely the same way that it holds concerning my other books including the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy: "It is only by describing conditions as they are that the road can be found to better conditions; it is only by describing human beings as they are, describing their needs, their feelings, their problems, their actions, that they can be made better . . . if this be indecency, then life is going to be increasingly indecent despite all the efforts of all the censors, official or otherwise." Permit me to reaffirm everything these words mean.

For some years, now, the prejudiced forces of censorship have been straining at the leash in the United States in order to begin a new witch hunt against serious and honest writing. These forces need only governmental precedents in order to come out into the open, and to begin a reactionary campaign of legal book lynching in this country. If your government does not rescind this unwarranted ban on my book, it can well provide the necessary example. And if this happens, it will be clear where the public responsibility for such a campaign can be laid. Because of facts such as these which I present in my letter, the action of Canadian customs officials is one which does and must concern the public of both the United States and of Canada. I therefore regard it as my duty to protest this banning, to call it to the attention of the writers and the readers of both the United States and the Dominion of Canada, and to call upon them to give me public support in my effort to have this ban rescinded.

In conclusion, may I stress the fact that governmental censorship of serious works of literature can only lead one to conclude that such censorship is based on distrust of those who read books, fear that they are not free enough, decent enough, to read serious works without being deleteriously affected. If this is the case, then one must look for the reason in the conditions of life, the conditions of freedom, and the conditions of education in a country which resorts to this practice of book banning. Further, distrust of the people, expressed through censorship, can lead to ever deepening reaction; it can only create fear in the hearts and minds of creative artists. It can only put hypocrisy in place of frankness and a dedication to truth.

Permit me, thus, in the light of these considerations, formally to request that the ban on my novel, *Bernard Clare*, be removed.

—JAMES T. FARRELL

ANTHOLOGY

Jean Wahl

THE LAND OF UNHAPPINESS

Tearing Misfortune

(*Rimbaud*)

This bitter taste on my lips and in my throat
Is the taste of the world.
How strongly I feel you, World,
Taste, odor of misfortune,
Strength of separation and contracted vibration,
I feel at one with this violent element of division,
I am alone with the principle of solitude,
And cradled by this negation of dreams.

Sister Misery

Misery, my sister found again at last,
With your strong colourless odor of fatigue,
Do you recall our father Great Disorder,
and Revolt, our mother?
Now I only see in your eyes weariness beyond despair;
A weight difficult to bear is heavy on you;
You fix upon nothing a brow which strains and contracts
beneath the idea of nothing.
How well you can become drunk with yourself and vague pleasures.
O Misery, my sister, broken one who show me myself.
Is the world so low? We are at the world's lowest point,
We can never climb back up,
And the accordions of the depths sigh in the conches,
We are still lower than that.

Lost

Your eye half-shut upon the absence of dreams,
Your voice which remains muffled and cannot rush forth,
I feel your accomplice, spying upon your desire
Always deceived, but panting with brief fever.

Both of us unfortunate children, unpenitent
Lost in our will to be lost

Brilliant looks fixed upon this deserted night,
We listen to the low beating of the drum of time.

The great waters of day, and the cry of trumpets,
Are distant and weak, but simply knowing
That they are and will inevitably pierce this night
Drunken us and sings our heads.

Rolling Stone

Rolling its stone above my head,
Harshly, softly,
I feel life which is there, and not there,
Patient, impatient,
The stranger above my head,
Into whose absent eyes I look,
I absent
And all that has the sound of familiar things
A strange soft sound deep in the corridor.

—Translated by WILLIAM MEAD

Henri Michaux

SELECTIONS FROM "AU PAYS DE LA MAGIE" (1941)

You can see the cage, hear the fluttering. There is the unmistakable noise of beaks sharpening themselves against the bars. But birds—none.

In one of these empty cages I heard the most intense screeching of parakeets that I have ever heard. Needless to say, not one was to be seen.

But what a noise! As if that cage contained three, four dozen:

"Is it that they all can't fit in such a little cage?" I asked, mechanically, but as I heard myself saying it, adding a shade of mockery.

"But they do . . ." their Master replied firmly, "That's why they are making such a racket. They want more room."

* * *

To walk on both banks of a stream is a painful exercise.

Rather frequently you see a man like that (student in magic) going up a river, walking on the one and the other bank at the same time: very much preoccupied, he doesn't see you. For what he is realizing is delicate and can put up with no distraction. He would find himself quickly indeed alone on one bank, and what a shame!

* * *

The K's ridiculed the E's, their neighbors, by making them yawn, yawn often, often, in every connection, irresistibly yawn.

A small revenge for some affront given a long time ago, doubtless, as is customary in these matters, so long ago nobody any longer knows the start of it.

But the K's, spiteful, never having pardoned the E's, make them yawn!

Now that's not so bad. But who likes to suffer ridicule?

These incessant yawns, which they can't prevent, and which betray so flagrantly and shamefully their inferiority in magic power, make them sad, sadder and sadder. They never succeed in making the best of their yawns.

Their honor, they think, is involved.

—*Translated by* ED SELDON

Alain Bosquet

TO THE POET

Poet, it is no longer the time of the chrysanthemums which descend from the blue; it is no longer the time of the jellyfish which reascend, raptured and sated, from the bottom of the sea;

Poet, today the sky lets loose only parachutes; today the sea gives up only mines in quest of collision;

Poet, they hung your Beatrice for daring to go on loving you;

Poet, they shot Hamlet and Othello because they dared to go on thinking.

Forget your easy coaches (it is the way of blinded chariots); forget the barking spaniels (it is the revolving of roaring machine guns), forget the dew (it is the turn of mustard gas).

What has become of your mountain, without a fortress?

What has your little harbor, hidden in the cliffs, become but a nest of submarines?

And your park. Do you remember it? It is today the cemetery of decapitated marksmen.

Who are you, Poet? You were seen closing the doors of your ivory tower and leaving on the demolished roads;

They saw you in tears in front of your books burning in the squares;

They saw you in the stern of steamboats, leaning over—the grim face of exile;

They saw you attending, powerless, the torture of your shadow which refused to say "Mercy."

Who are you, Poet? Always in flight, always searching to recapture the world and yourself, you found only vexation and understood only denunciation.

Stop, Poet. It is time to suffer both in your body and in your illusion; it is the time to unite slaughter and fear between two games of massacre.

Poet, let your pen fall: here is a gun; take off your carnival mask. Cast off your toga: here is the uniform; your knife is no longer going to cut laurels but human throats; replace your parchment by an order of attack, your poem by a death letter.

Poet, you are not entitled to life if you interfere with death;
 You haven't the right to breathe unless you conquer deflagration.
 Poet, you will be a soldier: you will destroy the melodious oak; you will pierce
 holes in the rainbow with guns.
 Poet, you will be a prisoner; bayonets will rise before your slightest sighs; ropes
 will strangle your smallest images.
 Poet, you will be afraid: you will close your eyes each time an airplane cuts
 off the heads of young girls as the wind sail of a windmill mows down
 the rows of wild poppies. You will become accustomed to fearing comets,
 as though they were man-eating shells.
 Poet, don't say yet: "This is the wound of my forearm. I wrote a ballad about
 it. This is the explosion of a bomb which carried away my eye. I drew
 an epic of suffering from it. This is the shrapnel which distorted my
 forehead. It inspired an ode on hate."
 Poet, your words must be the words of lead, and your silences the silences of
 gun powder.
 Poet, before reaching altitudes you must submit to hanging, before studying
 depth you must know what it means to fall.
 A litre of blood for a poem; a pound of flesh for a syllable—such is the new
 price of poetry.

Suffer, Poet: if you succeed in mastering the Apocalypse, one day—the same
 day that the flood of destruction will yield to the waterlilies and the
 earth-quake and the séisme to the . . . birds—one day you will at last
 have the right to speak.

—Translated by MARILYN MORSS

Federico Garcia Lorca

SONG OF THE DRY ORANGE TREE

Woodcutter.

Cut my shadow.
 Deliver me from the torture
 of seeing myself without oranges.

Why was I born between mirrors?

The day turns round me.
 And the night copies me
 in all her stars.

I wish to live without seeing myself.

Then ants and thistledowns
 may dream they are
 my leaves and my birds.

Woodcutter.

Cut my shadow.
 Deliver me from the torture
 of seeing myself without oranges.

—Translated by G. TEXIDOR

Jules Supervielle

SUFFERING DEAD MAN

Ah! Even in death I suffer sleeplessness
I want to make of the eternal some small present
I still feel too hearty to enter forgetfulness
And my voice is poor in the universal harmony.

How would I renounce so many memories
When the spirit is weighed down with invisible baggage
I am busier in death than on a voyage
And I float and do not sink in dying.

The four slabs of wood which held me under the earth
Could not keep the sky from entering the cemetery
The world for me becomes an immense raft
On which the soul comes and goes without finding its level.

All raises itself again with the stone of the tomb
Our first look delivers a hundred doves.
For him who had only his length in wood,
The trees, he is already the handsomest beyond.

—*Translated by* WILLIAM MEAD

A. C. Ayguesparse

BRABANT

Brabant, clear rest from the plows, with bare arms
your Sunday sky bitten by paper kites
your clouds wounded by the hawthorne's tooth
wrists deep in clover, hello, presence of watering-troughs
of gardens awakened in the young morning
hello, flower of fire on your rye straw robe
and so near to my hands your peasant's heart.
You are here with your horses of mud
the fertile sheet of your silence, your courage,
in sabots, leaning against the sleep of the hop-fields
and your washes, your springs, the deaf nine-pin thunder
and centered in a great landscape of fever and yellow flame
their feet among the flowers, your crimson virgins.

—*Translated by* WILLIAM MEAD

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Jean Cassou

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Distant sounds of life, secret divinities,
auto horn, cries of children coming out,
carillon of salute on the eve of festivals,
blind car losing itself in infinity,
rumblings hidden in the folds of mute thicknesses,
what other genius than misfortune and the night
could have conducted me to the chasm where you are?
And I touch gropingly your friendly faces.

To deserve the welcome of such profound mysteries
I have despoiled myself of all my light:
light at once gathers in your voices.

Let me now return again through the postern
and climb again, bearing in me these black reflections,
flowers of an inverted sky, planets of my cavern.

—Translated by WILLIAM MEAD

Nessie Dunsmuir

BY THE WINDOW

Here by the window blackthorn and elder tree
sharpen my sight to love. The shadows of
small birds descend and raise,
clearer than print on page,
deeply forgotten colours of my stumbling days.

The Easter fields of children turn again
the legend's wheel. The painted eggs begin
to roll our death away.
In the cold April day
each child is blessed and lies with Spring within.

Here by my head blackbird and beaded tree
borrow me back from Easter's cross and kiss.
Bracken fronds hand me light.
My own beginning eyes
load at the sill the buds breaking to white.

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NOTES

This number of the *Briarcliff Quarterly* has been put out with the assistance of a summer staff selected from the membership of *Norman Macleod's* class in creative writing given during July and August at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. *William Mead*, serving as Associate Editor, has been in charge of the office at Briarcliff Junior College, Briarcliff Manor, New York. The delay in the appearance of this issue is due to the difficulties we encountered working away from the home office.

W. S. GRAHAM is one of the more interesting of the new British poets. "Background to Flight" is a chapter taken from *Paris Interlude: Memoirs of a Lost and Found Generation* by SAMUEL PUTNAM, to be published this fall by the Viking Press. HOWARD MOSS, who taught last year at Vassar College, is now in New York. VIVIENNE KOCH has recently been awarded a traveling fellowship by Columbia University. T. WEISS is editor of the *Quarterly Review of Literature*. JOHN GOULD FLETCHER is lecturing this summer at Mills College. JOHN SUTHERLAND is editor of the *Northern Review*. ANTHONY BOSMAN is our editorial representative in Holland. Beginning in September, WILLIAM PEDEN will be Associate Professor of English at the University of Missouri. FREDERICK HOFFMAN, who teaches at the Ohio State University, is one of the authors of *The Little Magazine: A History and Bibliography* recently issued by the Princeton University Press. FRANK JONES teaches classics at the University of Chicago.

MARILYN MORSS is a student at Briarcliff Junior College.

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